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FROM

Charles William Eliot.







THE HYPHEN

VOLUME II.



THE HYPHEN

BY
LIDA C. SCHEM

VOLUME II.



NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY
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Part III
MANHOOD



CHAPTER I

COMPASSION was more than a habit with Frau Ursula, it was second nature with her, so that it was quite natural, she being what she was, and America being what America was, that, as soon as Europe was plunged headlong into the gory abyss, she should have volunteered for Red Cross work. The Anasquoit Chapter of the Red Cross needed reorganizing, and Frau Ursula threw herself heart and soul into the work, with the result that very soon she was devoting virtually all of her time to her labor of love, She reserved barely sufficient time for her household duties, leaving for the Red Cross Work Rooms before ten in the morning and returning home after six in the evening.

Guido, therefore, on approaching home one afternoon, was surprised to see his mother sitting at the window, apparently talking to someone who was invisible to Guido. His first thought was of Vasalov, and he let himself in noiselessly, fully resolved to abscond as silently as he had entered if the visitor in the parlor were indeed his kinsman.

The visitor was not Vasalov, as Guido became aware the moment he had penetrated two steps into the hall. A very delicate, a very sweet, a very ingratiating perfume permeated the hall. Frau Ursula never used any perfume excepting heliotrope and so little of that that the fragrance never strayed far beyond her immediate proximity.

Guido sniffed critically, suspiciously, deliciously. He thought of *Frau Theaterdirektor*, but Frau Ursula had snubbed that lady so noticeably on several occasions that on second thought Guido decided the visitor could not be she.

He sniffed again. There was something intoxicating about this perfume. It steeped his senses in delight. It conjured pictures of carnival scenes—of beautiful women in scant attire attended by eager-eyed men; of gracious blue skies, of lapping water, of the rhythmic chanting of songs.

The boy started as from a sleep. Day-dreams he had had before, but never a day-dream of such a complexion. He brushed it aside, but a moment later it had taken possession of him again, for he had heard the visitor's voice.

It was a wonderful voice, a voice that thrilled like music, a voice which matched the perfume as ribbon may match the silk which it binds. It had never occurred to Guido until this moment that a voice has a personality quite as much as a face. It occurred to him now—came to him as a monumental discovery.

It was a voice like a bell, like a low-pitched, sonorously sweet—exquisitely melodious bell. It was a voice that thrilled and stabbed and soothed, all in one. In timbre it was rich, caressive, possessing a sort of haunting beauty that held the listener spell-bound, whether he would or no. Not a word did the boy understand of what the voice was saying. Yet he stood so close that he might have understood every word. But the sheer beauty of the sound inhering in that marvelous, pervasive voice made him impervious to the meaning of the spoken word.

Curiosity urged him to enter the parlor. Fear, born suddenly of some latent instinct of the soul, bade him forbear. Curiosity and pride conquered. Who was this woman who possessed power to rouse in him such a host of stimulating thoughts and untried emotions?

He entered the parlor at last, and stared incredulously upon the face that was launching him upon yet uncharted seas of his nature—incredulously, because in that first throbbing moment of intemperate sensation and amazingly errant thought he still held enough mastery of himself to marvel at the wild discrepancy between the cause and the effect.

For he did not, at first, think her at all beautiful. Her pallor was extraordinary, as extraordinary as the strangely red line made by her mouth. He thought she looked fragile, sickly. If for "fragile" and "sickly" he had substituted "frail" and "unhealthy," and then again "unwholesome" for "unhealthy," he would have been very near the truth. But he put her down as not overstrong and that was a point in her favor, for he pitied her, and pity, as we know, is prone to be interbound with other, stronger emotions.

Her hair was beautiful—that he saw at a glance. There was a superabundance of it and she had wound it about her head in a seemingly careless fashion, so that the heavy coil in which it lay showed to best advantage. When she moved her head the hair seemed to turn from the rich brown of oak leaves in autumn to the golden red seen in old mahogany. It never showed as a monochrome. In different lights it seemed to reflect different shades, and those different shades rippled through each other and interwove themselves into a harmonious patternless whole, like some wonderful old brocade in which the outlines have been abraded by time, leaving intact the soft dull tones and high lights and deep shadows.

Her eyes? She did not raise them to the boy for the longest time, bowing, as his mother introduced her as Frau Gottschalk, with lowered eye-lids. He felt sure that her eyes must be blue. But when she finally raised her eyes to his face, with a slowness and a softness of gesture which he never forgot, he was amazed to find himself gazing into limpid pools of a warm brown shot through and through with gold.

All in all both her hair and her eyes reminded of nothing so much as of slowly flowing water under a summer sun-down, when a weird, soft, dark golden warmth presents an undistinguishable shade which acts like an enchantment upon him who gazes too long.

"Frau Gottschalk," his mother was explaining to him, "has been kind enough to promise to stay with me at least over the summer and to take the housekeeping off my hands. You know how long I have been looking for a suitable lady to help me in this way."

It was the first Guido had heard of his mother's activity in that direction, but he obediently murmured, "Oh, yes."

"So I am very fortunate in having procured Frau Gottschalk."

"Very," echoed the boy.

It was at this point of the conversation that the lady raised her eyes to his for the first time.

"Your mother is very kind to put things the way she does," said the new *Stuetse*, in her vibrant, melodious voice. "But you must know—as I do—that she created this position for me. I was stranded. Quite down and

out. And Frau Baumgarten recommended me to your mother, and your mother took me in without further ado."

"*Aber, liebe Frau Gottschalk,*" Frau Ursula interposed, "indeed, indeed, I am overjoyed to find a lady who is a real lady to come into my home and assume my household duties so that I may give my undivided time to the Red Cross."

Frau Gottschalk offered no further emendation of Frau Ursula's words.

"*Ach, ja,*" she said, in a subtle, winning, demure way.

She smiled mysteriously as she spoke and her smile seemed to say more eloquently even than her manner that, since Frau Ursula did not wish it, she would not insist upon Frau Ursula's charitableness in taking her in. But charity it was, and Frau Ursula knew it and she knew it and this handsome young man knew it, who had gallantly feigned a knowledge of plans which never existed to please his mother and save a poor waif embarrassment. As the smile receded from her lips she again looked at Guido. And every nerve in the boy's body quickened.

That was the beginning of Guido's acquaintance with Erna Gottschalk.

When Frau Ursula and he were left alone, which was not until supper-time, Guido's mother confided to him that what the lady had said was literally true. She had been completely down and out—practically starving. Tante Baumgarten had said. Tante Baumgarten had discovered her while trying to find a washerwoman, who had advertised. She could not locate the washerwoman—evidently the address given in the paper was wrong—but she had found Frau Gottschalk instead. And in her dismay she had called on Frau Ursula at the Red Cross and told her all about it. And Frau Ursula had immediately gone to see for herself.

"That beautiful creature in a tenement house, think of it!" she cried. She was quite indignant with a providence which could permit such things. And so Frau Ursula, on the spur of the moment, had offered her a position and a home.

"She will, you know, be invaluable to me," Frau Ursula continued, apologetically. And then, quite irrelevently: "Of course, it's not right, but a beautiful woman in distress moves one to pity more quickly than a plain one."

Guido pondered this. So his mother thought her beautiful. He didn't. At least he thought he didn't. But he could not be sure. And because he wished to gain certainty on this point, he did not take his eyes off her when she again came into the room.

He took his problem to his room with him when he finally left the dining-room, where the two women were chatting friendlily together over their sewing.

Charm she had. Of that there could be no doubt. She compelled the eye—of that also he was certain by this time. Her hair—magnificent. Her eyes—witchcraft. Her voice—a blend of organ and flute.

These phrases in which he was indulging himself flattered his creative pride. He thought he would like to write a poem about her, likening her to an exotic flower, to one of those weirdly fascinating orchids, displayed in florist's windows, which are hardly beautiful but possess a potent allure such as mere beauty does not own.

He sat down to his studies, but half an hour elapsed before he succeeded in clearing the page of the wisps of hair into which the shadows cast by the lamp magically transformed themselves.

And then, in the midst of a difficult logarithm, a new problem presented itself.

Where was her husband?

It was ridiculous to think of her as a married woman. Her figure was as slender and as dainty as a young girl's. Her hands were the hands of a fairy. So white. So unnaturally white. Like her face. Were her arms just as white? Her arms—and all the rest of her? He felt that he had been guilty of an immodesty of thought, and promptly blushed. To punish himself he sentenced himself to spend the rest of the evening at hard labor over his books. But he mitigated the harshness of that sentence at the end of a half-hour. He would take a recess of one minute every fifteen minutes. In which to think about her.

Where was her husband?

The wretched question troubled him all evening, and when he finally went to bed interposed itself between his eyes and sleep.

He lay awake for the longest time, wondering what Herr

Gottschalk had been like, what his first name had been, whether he was dead and why he had not thought to provide for so divine a creature.

And—had she loved him very much?

He awoke the next morning with a keen sense of having left uncompleted an important task. His mind immediately swung back to the problem which had so vexed him. He rose immediately, contrary to his habit and dressed hurriedly and went in search of his mother.

Frau Ursula was getting breakfast. His good-morning kiss alighted vaguely somewhere between his mother's nose and chin.

"Mother," he demanded, breathelessly, "where is her husband?"

Frau Ursula became greatly embarrassed. She seemed as greatly embarrassed as when, as a very little boy, he had demanded to be told how and where people procured their babies.

"Oh, well, it doesn't matter," he said.

"The man is a brute," Frau Ursula said, with sudden energy. "An utter brute. Details are unnecessary."

"Why are they unnecessary?"

"You're too young to be introduced to the seamy side of life."

"If she's not too young, I guess I'm not."

Frau Ursula was for ignoring this, but, a horrid thought seizing her, she exclaimed, impetuously, standing in the middle of the kitchen floor, the open oatmeal canister in her hands:

"Guido, don't you dare ask her."

"Why not?" Guido was beginning to enjoy himself.

"Why not? Because, of course, it would be the height of indelicacy."

"Why—indelicacy?" pursued naughty Guido.

"Guido!"

"Mother!"

Frau Ursula shook her head gloomily over such sad badness as her boy was evincing. Silently she poured the dry oatmeal into the boiling water.

"*Mutterchen*, don't you think you are very unreasonable? I really want to know. And if you won't tell me, and my curiosity becomes insupportable, why——"

"Sssssss—she is coming," whispered Frau Ursula.

She fluttered about the kitchen excitedly. When quite close to Guido she repeated her injunction in a whisper.

"Don't you dare," she said.

All through breakfast Guido pursued his speculations as to the nature of the estrangement between Frau Gottschalk and her husband. These speculations wound their way along a subconscious channel of thought. Apparently he was giving his entire attention to the conversation and to the new member of the household.

Frau Gottschalk, attired in a simply made morning dress of mauve nun's veiling, finished at the neck and sleeves with white maline, and wearing the daintiest little apron that Guido had ever seen, was making a pretty feint of waiting on his mother and himself and failing lamentably.

"In a few days," she said, "I will know where everything is. And then, when there is no servant, you, *mein liebe, verehrte* Frau Hauser will not have to bother about a thing."

"My dear child," said Frau Ursula, "first of all I want you to rest up, to rest up thoroughly."

Frau Gottschalk heaved the softest, saddest little sigh imaginable.

"I have rested enough," she said, "to last me the rest of my days. What I want is work, lots of work. Work kills thought. *Liebe* Frau Hauser, if you want to be good to me you will provide me with work, you will make me work should I show a disposition to shirk. Should I shirk I beg you to believe me in advance that it will be merely because my terrible recollections are besieging me and incapacitating me. A sharp reprimand, then, *verehrte Goennerin*, will be the greatest kindness you can show me."

All this was in the best of tone and in perfect keeping with her status as *Stuetze der Hausfrau*, and it had at the same time a tragic ring which quite unnerved Guido. It also affected his mother greatly, as he could see. He thought: "She means that brute of a husband." But although he tried hard to imagine what sort of cruelty a husband might be guilty of toward a wife, especially toward such a wife, he failed to conjure any credible picture of Frau Gottschalk's past. Had he been faithless to her? His mother would have said so. Had he beaten her? That,

too, his mother would have spoken of frankly. What else was there? He was a very innocent lad. He gave it up after a while as being as great a mystery as the Sphinx's Riddle.

The coming of Frau Gottschalk to the Hauser household was an innovation which bore immediate and pleasant fruit. Frau Ursula had been deplorably overworked. What with her long hours at the Red Cross Work Rooms, which she was loth to change—for every day brought new relays of eager but entirely unskilled bandage and gauze workers—and her housework, and the ordering and preparing of meals, and the washing of dishes, and the dusting, and the making of beds, and the more obvious social duties which no self-respecting woman is willing to forego, her life, in Guido's terminology, had been that of a galley-slave.

With the coming of Erna Gottschalk the only demands upon Frau Ursula's time which remained were those of the Red Cross, her private charities and her social duties. Frau Ursula and Guido came home every day to a luncheon perfectly prepared and exquisitely served, to a dinner equally well cooked, to tidy, meticulously neat rooms, to a smiling face and a pleasant, cheerful greeting. If it rained, Erna Gottschalk was at the door to take the dripping umbrella from Frau Ursula's or Guido's hand. If it was blustery, she opened the door to save them the fumbling for key in reticule or pocket. She was ubiquitous. She was exquisite. She was delightful. She was always amiable. And she was a marvelous housekeeper and cook.

And with all her affability and cheerfulness she maintained a little air of resigned, patient endurance, which, beheld in one so young, inevitably moved the onlooker to mingled pity for the woman and indignation toward the man who had wrecked this young and blooming life.

She would not allow Frau Ursula to help with the dishes. The servantless interrugnum must come to an end some time or other, Erna Gottschalk said, and in the meantime Frau Ursula must not as much as set the table or wash a saucer. Frau Gottschalk's temper for the first time showed a sharp edge when Frau Ursula stole into the kitchen one day after lunch, while her *Stuetze* was busy with the laundry man, and began washing the dishes. She threatened to go away and never come back. Never. And

having gained her point, she broke into tears and wept inconsolably because she had been insolent to her dearest, her kindest, her noblest friend and benefactor and before Frau Ursula could divine her intention, she had bent low over her employer's hand and kissed it to set a sign manual, as it were, to the overwhelming abandon of her grief in having forgotten her manners.

Frau Ursula, of course, soothed her, and kissed her, and petted her and called her "my dear, dear child," and told her what a tremendous help she had been and that she was quite invaluable and that she must never never threaten to do anything so naughty as to leave. Then Erna's tears subsided, and Frau Ursula went to the Red Cross, enjoining Guido to come right home from college because she was afraid poor Erna would have a headache as a result of her crying spell. In that case Guido was to telephone her so that she might come home.

As Frau Ursula had predicted, so it fell out. Guido came home at four o'clock to find Erna staggering about looking as white as a lily. She admitted reluctantly that she had a headache. He telephoned his mother. Frau Ursula came home and besought Erna to go to bed, or at least, to lie down on the couch in the dining-room. Erna resisted. There was no need to lie down—half an hour's rest in her room would do it. It was evident that she was not telling something which she might have told, and Frau Ursula begged her to be frank. It then appeared that Erna, when seized with a headache, might obtain instantaneous relief by taking down her hair. In fact, she was subject to these headaches owing to the weight of her hair and the warmth which it engendered. In warm weather it was intolerable to wear it coiled about the head. It acted like a flaxseed poultice. People admired her hair unthinkingly, but it was really a nuisance. Some day she would cut it off.

"Oh, no, no," cried Guido, "you must not do that. Shall she, *Mutterchen*?"

"It would be a crime," said Frau Ursula with great unction.

"But," said Erna Gottschalk, "I don't think I ought to wear it down my back here in America, in a braid, the way I used to do at home."

"And why not?" Frau Ursula inquired.

"Americans are so decorous," said Erna, with modestly downcast eyes. "I fear, indeed, dear lady, I fear that it might not be deemed proper."

"Guido," said his mother, "do you see anything improper in a woman's displaying such glorious hair as Frau Gottschalk has by wearing it down her back?"

Guido saw nothing improper in such a display. He felt a tremendous desire to see the lady wearing her hair like a school-girl. This desire, however, he did not impart to his mother.

So it happened that Erna Gottschalk retired to her room, accompanied by Frau Ursula, and emerged fifteen minutes later cured of her headache by the simple expedient described.

Guido had a fleeting glimpse of her before he went out to attend to an errand for his mother. She looked enchanting. But she did not look enchanting in the way that a little girl looks enchanting. Her face was too mature and too tragic. It made the lad feel unimaged things to see her thus. And to cover his embarrassment he left hastily and earlier than was necessary.

"The dear boy does not wish to embarrass me," said Erna to Frau Ursula. "He is such a child, still, and yet so thoughtful."

"He is a good boy," said Frau Ursula, with a mother's pride.

"Perhaps," said Erna, "perhaps if it embarrasses him to see me like this, I had better put my hair back where it belongs before he gets home."

"You'll do nothing of the sort," said Frau Ursula. "He'll get accustomed in a day or so to seeing you like that. Embarrassed! Nonsense. You're not going to make yourself miserable for nothing. Guido is not a *Toelpel* like other boys of his age. I have never seen him embarrassed in feminine society."

Erna perceived that she had scraped up against a thin-skinned maternal vanity. She was too clever to recant or to repudiate her words. She said:

"I've never seen a boy of his age with finer sensibilities. And he is really very, very young in spite of his cleverness. And he's a Puritan, thanks to your way of bringing him

up, and instead of saying that it might embarrass him to see me thus, I should have said that he might disapprove of seeing me thus, although he gallantly disavowed it's not being proper. Young people, you know, *nice* young people, have such inflexible notions of *Schicklichkeit*.

"Well," said Frau Ursula, "it is a very long time since I was young and you are quite near my lad in age. So perhaps you are right. Nevertheless, I won't have the boy a prude. A woman who is a prude is bad enough. But a man who is a prude is utterly detestable. So I beg of you to wear your hair down your back and to-day, while you are alone, I think it would be an excellent plan to open it entirely, and lie down here on the couch. You'll have more air here than in your own room."

Then Frau Ursula went back to the Red Cross rooms, where she was badly needed, and Erna, obeying her suggestion, lay down on the couch and rested so well and slept so soundly that she did not hear Guido let himself in when he came home half an hour later, although, as she had told Frau Ursula and Guido repeatedly, she was a very light sleeper.

So it happened that the boy, coming into the dining-room, beheld a vision that rooted him to the spot.

She made a picture such as an artist might have painted who had caught the secret of the golden mean between the esthetic exaltation of Puvis du Chavennes and decadent loveliness of Henner.

The negligee which she wore was made of peacock blue radium silk, shot with gold, and was cut low, revealing an exquisite neck and bosom. Her head was flung back, whereby the full sweep of the wonderful lines of chin and throat and bosom were shown to full advantage. One white arm, dimpled at the elbow like a child's, rested lightly upon the pillow above her head, a graceful position which further set off the tantalizing wonder of the face and throat and of that snowy paradise which lay below the throat. The other arm, lightly bent, the sleeve carelessly flung back, lay against the dark snowy mass of her hair. And the haunting mellow perfume which clung to all of her clothes further lashed on his senses and tripped his will.

The picture which she made was not there to guide in

a complete portrait. He saw now this beauty, now that wonder, but his mind refused to accept the vision in its entirety. Probably the impression made upon his mind was much the same as the impression made by a lighted Christmas Tree upon a very young child. The wonder and the beauty and the entire unsuspectedness of the thing held him enthralled, held him speechless, stupid, panting, glowing feverishly, panic-stricken and filled withal with a terrible, a horrible yearning.

He wanted to tear himself away from the spot and yet he did not want to go. He had a horrid fear that she might wake and be angry with him for standing there and staring at her. He was afraid to stay and he was afraid to go. Finally he nerved himself to make a specific effort. He retreated two steps, walking backwards, his eyes still upon her face. He was certain that his movements would wake her, but she slept on, apparently oblivious to sound.

His courage returned. He found himself walking forward again instead of backwards. He wanted another look at her. His eyes became bolder. They explored—as far as they might—that snowy haven which was so beautiful that he wanted to cry out aloud, to weep, to laugh, to dance, to recite poetry because of the sheer, haunting, seductive beauty of the thing.

Would she awake if he crept closer still? He ventured another step, and another, and still another, which brought him to her very side. He fell upon one knee, half-innocently, half-propelled by awakening desire. A violent wish to touch her arm or the full white throat took possession of him. He did not connect this wish with a desire to kiss, and yet his lips were the agent by which he would have established communication with her arm, her throat, and the glorious snowdrift which lay beyond.

Self-realization came and made him shrink into himself with horror. Only for a moment. The desire to touch his lips to her face or her arm became stronger and more violent, became more insistent, more imperious. Why not? The voice of the tempter was in his ear. She was sleeping soundly. His lips might touch hers ever so lightly, ever so gently. She would not waken and he would know the sweetness and the witchery of having kissed the superb creature.

His better nature triumphed. He raised himself to his feet, and tiptoed away. He was almost out of the room when he heard her stir.

"Guido."

He turned, face crimsoning.

"Guido, do not go."

He stood stock-still. The lady smiled at him, gently, winningly.

"Guido, I was awake when you knelt down at my side. I should not have gone asleep here—your mother suggested it—I sleep soundly after my head has been bad. Guido, dear lad, why are you blushing so?"

He could not answer, but stood mute in asinine confusion.

"Guido, you are the dearest boy. I thought you were going to kiss me—I wanted you to know that I knew you had conquered yourself. I wanted you to know."

The intonation of her voice made the boy almost delirious. It augmented and rounded out the enchantment which had fallen upon him, and which was steeping him in wormwood and myrrh and frankincense.

He came back into the room at last and stood near her, quite excitingly, deliciously near her. He had never known before that mere proximity to a person might be fraught with such exuberant delight.

"Guido, help me sit up."

Eyes burning, he extended his hand. The fingers that wound themselves about his were cool and soft. She raised herself into a sitting posture. Her hair which, while she was recumbent, had seemed like a pillow of rare texture, now fell about her shoulders like a mantle. It lay heavily across both her shoulders. It billowed over her arms, over her hand and the boy's.

His self-possession was being broken.

He turned his hand and caught at her hair and as he played with it, and allowed it to sift through his fingers, it again reminded him of flowing water upon which the dying sun has painted weird, elusive designs.

"It is beautiful," he said.

"Ah," said the lady, "I should not have let you see me like this. It was unforgivable of me to sleep so long. Tell me, dear boy, that you do not despise me."

"Despise you!" he repeated, foolishly. His brain was too fevered, too tangled, too given over to the horrible yearning which was turning him into a pillar of fire to say anything intelligent.

"You don't. That's dear of you." She gently shook her hair from his fingers, and wriggled herself further back upon the couch, where she might lean up against the wall, thus making a new picture for the boy to revel in. "You don't despise me because you are good, Guido. I've been in heaven since coming here. To be with people like your mother and yourself, ah! you cannot imagine what that has meant to me. Shall I tell you something? I was afraid when I heard there was a son of seventeen in the house. Afraid. Of you. Guido, if you knew what my experiences have been."

Guido—uninvited—here sat down upon the couch beside her. She made room for him. The warmth of her body radiated to him not only from her person but from the pillows among which she had reclined, and which were fragrant with her pervasive perfume.

"My mother told me that I must not ask you," he said, futilely, "but she hinted at dark things."

"Dark—when a woman's husband, who should be her natural protector, turns himself into—well, we won't speak about it. It is nothing for you to hear."

"If you suffered it," he murmured.

"No, no, Guido. Through me you shall never learn of the wretched world that lies beyond your home. Thrice happy boy, to have such a mother and such a home. And—I might add—such a disposition. For nothing could make you other than you are. Of that I am convinced."

"Then why not confide in me?" he said.

"I wish to forget all about the world of men."

"And am I not a man?"

"You? You are a saint. I have known boys three years your junior with whom a woman was not safe. But you—you——"

She sprang lightly from the couch and drew herself up at full height. She stretched her arm upward. She was magnificent to look at—beautiful, lovely, regal. There was a strange light in her eyes. Her very flesh was aglow with an impalpable flame.

"Look at me," she cried. "Am I beautiful? All women desire beauty as men desire knowledge and strength. Yet I speak truth when I tell you that I have cursed my beauty because all it harvested me through years and years was insult and the proffer of illicit love. I came to hate all men. I married one whom I thought honorable to escape men. You will not understand what I mean by that. And having married I found that I had flung myself upon the mercy of a jungle beast. I came to hate men more and more. I feared them, I despised them, abominated them. And then your mother came into my life, your mother and you.

"Your mother, Guido," she continued, in a lower key, "did much for me. But you did more. Of women I knew that they possessed charity. But I had not yet met a man of honor and restraint. And then—you!"

Quick as a flash she had flung herself upon her knees at the boy's side.

"See," she cried, "that is how I feel toward you, my dear knight-errant—you who have given me back my faith in men."

Her face was close to his, her breath touched his cheek. The boy lost all consciousness of other things. All the world was blotted out from his perception save only this woman and himself. Her lips drew him like a magnet. His mind was at the same time benumbed, robbed of its faculty of will, and turned into a cauldron of fire.

The inevitable happened. He leaned forward and kissed the woman's lips.

"Ah," she cried, "now I must go away from here after all."

Guido was beside himself. The kiss, oddly, had cleared his mind. He implored her to forgive him. He vowed that he was a knave, a rascal, a scamp. She, he said, was the purest of women. He all but wept. She listened in silence for a long time. Finally she spoke.

"I will stay," she said, magnificently. "After all, it is as natural to kiss at it is to eat and to drink. And your kiss—you innocent babe—was as chaste as yourself. Neither of us need blush for it."

"It will never happen again," whispered the boy.

But it did happen again—again and again and yet again.

So frequently it happened that but for the exhilaration, which remained ever new and intoxicating, her kisses would have become a mere habit. And yet the boy's conscience was not asleep. He tried at various times to break the bonds that were coiling themselves about him. He came down late for breakfast, and he came down early. He avoided coming home after college until he knew that his mother was home, and he went to his room early after dinner to avoid being left alone with the enchantress. But she was too subtle for him. She contrived, dexterously, that they should be alone. Nor was it necessary for her to offer him her lips. A flash of the beautiful humid eyes, a sweet, sad flickering of smile about the luscious lips, and he was at her side, on his knees, entreating her for the poison which was threatening to corrode his moral marrow.

She was clever, too. She gauged the boy aright. She perceived that his appetites were less brutal than those of the average man, that his flesh, at a moment's notice, would veer about and place itself at the service of his spirit. So she devised the forging of spiritual and mental thongs as well. She asked him to explain things to her—pictures, abstruse passages in literature, matters pertaining to the war. And religion. She was so desperately clever that she did not entirely forswear the country of her birth. She shed wily tears over the necessity of being forced to choose between her country and her conscience. There was something to be said for her country. And she said it. And then wept anew, and with her eyes still dewy with tears, accused herself of possessing an inferior morality, and besought him to help her find the right path—the path which Americans trod—the path which he trod—and which had made him what he was: good and pure and passionless.

That last did not ring true to the boy. He had kissed her and he was not passionless and she knew it. His mind was logical. He did not wish to think ill of her—but in moments when his blood was cool and his brain was clear he began vaguely to wonder whether the tale she had told his mother was true.

She never told it to him. She answered always with the same evasion: "It is nothing for you to hear."

He began to wonder about many things. For her kisses—and his—were no longer innocent. The sinister, luridly

beautiful empire of the senses was being laid out invitingly for his inspection.

With his mother's sanction, at her suggestion frequently—for his mother was still completely under Erna's spell—they went to the theater together. Whenever he saw Elschen or Janet, or other girls he knew, he was ashamed to go near them. Elschen, accustomed to what she thought his vagaries, did not trouble herself about this new, odd coolness that had fallen upon him.

With Janet it was different. She presented a smiling face and merry eyes for the world to see by day, but at night she lay awake, suspecting she knew not what and weeping in abject misery. She did not suspect the truth. She had seen Guido once or twice when he was on the way to the theater with his mother's *Stuetze*. But the bald fact conveyed nothing to her. Erna Gottschalk was twenty-five or twenty-six, which is no age at all for a woman these latter days, but to seventeen twenty-five seems next-door neighbor to senility. Moreover, Janet pitied Erna profoundly. She had heard rumors of an unhappy marriage and great misery and thought it only natural that, being housemates, Guido should escort the unfortunate lady to concert and theater. As an act of charity. For, what else could it be?

One evening Frau Ursula announced at dinner that she was going to the *Universal-Theater* with Tante Baumgarten. Herr Baumgarten had purchased two seats in advance, but the unexpected arrival of a buyer in town made it impossible for him to go. Otto was too pressed for time to go. Therefore Tante Baumgarten had telephoned Frau Ursula, and Frau Ursula had signified her willingness to go.

The day being rainy, Guido had studied all afternoon, and had virtually finished all his home-work. He was, on that evening, in a peculiar frame of mind. He had, during the afternoon, suffered one of those introspective self-envisagements which, if there are uncomfortably many entries on the wrong side of the ledger, and the moral sense is not yet blunted, lead to stringent self-abasement. He had on his way home worked himself into a fine pitch of moral exaltation. Never would he kiss Erna Gottschalk or any other woman again. Never again would he fold her or

any woman to his heart; never bend back a woman's face and caress the throbbing throat. He no longer had any illusions as to the enchantress' character. He understood perfectly that he had not blundered in upon Beauty asleep that afternoon barely a month ago, but that the entire little comedy had been carefully devised and stage-set for his especial benefit. That knowledge spelled rafters and beams for his resolution. He did not quite see his way clear—did not know how he was going to go about things. But he was going to go about them. That was the great point. And he meant to have it out with her that evening.

He made one miscalculation in his reckoning. He omitted Desire from the equation. And although he now despised the lady, he still desired her—a circumstance of which he was not aware. He believed, with the haziness of honesty and inexperience that, having acquired a moral distaste for her, a physical distaste would follow.

"We'll wash no dishes to-night," Erna began, as soon as the door had closed upon Frau Ursula. "We'll talk, shall we? Talk and talk—and perhaps, who knows—just kiss a little."

"No," said Guido, abruptly, "we'll not kiss. Not to-night nor to-morrow, nor ever." He averted his eyes, for at sight of the exquisite eyes and the marvelous lips and the soft, downy throat, his blood began tumultuously apprising him that physical distaste is by no means the inevitable corollary of moral indignation.

The woman was clever. Her eyes dilated involuntarily with surprise at the suddenness of the moral revulsion in the boy. She knew at a glance just what was passing in his mind. Perhaps she had expected something of the sort.

She sat looking at him dumbly, piteously. That look placed him in the wrong. It stamped him a Lothario, a Lovelace, a Don Juan. The luckless boy began to tremble and shiver. He said, with sudden vigorous incisiveness:

"I've done wrong. Here you are, under my mother's roof, and I have been behaving detestably to you. My mother would never forgive me. But I want to assure you right now that hereafter you will be entirely secure from my——" he fumbled about helplessly for a word, thought of "molestations" and discarded it as hopelessly

melodramatic, and finally concluded lamely with "well, from my advances."

If he had been the most inveterate heart-breaker, the gayest of gay lady-killers, he could not have hit more precisely upon the correct form and usage in affairs of this sort. So strangely inrooted is that odd invisible monument of centuries—the sex's unwritten code of honor in affairs of dishonor.

The lady regarded him from between narrow lids. She was not so sure as she had once been that she understood him perfectly. She was not inexperienced, as the reader may have guessed, but this boy in many respects violated every rule covering the masculine gender. The temperature of his passion was most variable. Kisses he had given her which in their fierce voracity had eclipsed the recollection of all other kisses. And a few minutes later, without cause, without reason, without any possible explanation—since satiety was excluded as passion had not been gratified—he had turned to ice. He was, as she expressed it in communing with herself, Sappho-like in the rapid changeability of his mood. Also she felt that he had read her. She found herself in a quandary.

"It is not you but I who have acted very badly," she said. Her rich voice, which always carried the suggestion of chimes, gave this simple statement the significance of a ceremonial confession. It did not invite polite denial. It was final as the confession made to a priest for the purpose of obtaining absolution is final.

She raised her face to his. She was a consummate mistress of the histrionic art, although she had never set foot upon any stage excepting the great stage of life. He was not looking at her at the moment, and this gave her time to arrange her features. Ultimately he did look at her, and then she knew, by the start which he gave, that she had molded her expression to exactly the right lines.

He came and sat down beside her. As she had known that he would do.

She had an inspiration. Although he appeared moved, she could see that his stern determination and high resolve had not been relaxed. She was playing for high stakes, and she decided, on the spur of the moment, to play trumps.

"Guido, I said a moment ago that I had behaved very

badly. But that is not wholly true. Dear boy, do you not think that I see how the curse of Adam is oppressing you? You are making a brave fight, dear lad. The morals which your noble mother has instilled in you and your own fine, spiritual nature have made this battle comparatively easy. So far. For, and there is no shame in it, I doubt and have doubted for some time if even you, fine as you are, can entirely vanquish those deep-seated emotions which, if indulged in promiscuously, lead to a man's moral and physical undoing. Guido, at the risk of being misunderstood by you, at the risk of being despised by you, I am going to be quite candid.

"I love you. Do not start like that, and do not, from a mistaken notion of gallantry, tell me that you love me. For you do not love me. It would be a great tragedy if you did. For you. As I am married. And older than yourself. That my love for you, my unrequited love, deepens the tragedy of my life does not matter in the least. I am so accustomed to unhappiness. If happiness were to come my way I wouldn't know what to do with it. I would not, indeed. There is only one teeny, weeny bit of happiness which I desire and which I am still capable of appreciating, and that, dear boy—have you not guessed it?—is to see you happy. And to be happy you must not be wasted in any way." She paused. The boy stared at her, not comprehending.

"Dear lad," she resumed, lightly touching his hand, "you do not know what the world is. Will you think me evil-minded because I dwell so insistently on this one phase of human nature? How can I do otherwise. It has wrecked my life. My husband—no, to you my lips must remain sealed on that point. Please God you may never come in contact with that sort of thing, with vice, naked and unashamed. Guido, can you not guess from I have said to you, from what it is that I wish to save you? My life is ruined. I am a derelict. You, dear boy, in whom purity and strength are combined in so rare a degree, have given me courage to live on. Shall I do nothing for you in return? You are young, rich, handsome. Women—unscrupulous, loose women—will lay snares for you. You are predestined to come to grief. You will either turn into a monster like other men or your life will be ruined.

No, you will not turn into a monster. You will be trapped into marriage by some worthless woman and your whole life will be ruined, like mine."

She rose, as if swayed by an uncontrollable agitation, and Guido, quite unconsciously, also rose and stood beside her. She laid her hands on his shoulders with the spacious gesture of matronly kindness. She was a consummate actress, indeed.

"It must not be," she said in her sweet, rich contralto. "It must not be. You are too fine to be desecrated by loose women. Do you understand me now? Although I am married, I am a free agent morally because my husband has ill-treated, disgraced and deserted me. I love you. I say it without shame. You, ultimately, should love and marry a girl of suitable age. Until then—Guido—until then, if the voice of nature becomes unbearably strong, I who love you would do for you what no woman, unloved, has done before for the man she loves. Do you understand me now, dear?"

The boy's lips trembled. He was too deeply moved for words. Swept away was his vicarious knowledge of the world, gleaned from Flaubert, from Maupassant, from Daudet. Passages from Balzac, it is true, came back to him, and strengthened his belief that he had done the lady a grievous wrong. He was generous to a fault. Having injured a friend he would make royal amends.

His knees trembled. He went and sat upon the couch, and crouching forward, buried his face in his hands.

"I've misjudged you," he almost sobbed. "I'm entirely unworthy of you and of such love."

"Dear boy," she said, and, sitting down beside him, stroked his hair with chaste fingers, as his mother might have done. "You understand now, dear, do you not? that the last thing in the world which I desire is to arouse your passion. But if it is aroused, if nature refuses to be denied—and we cannot deny nature beyond a certain point with impunity—you know that I am waiting. Waiting."

He caught her hands to his lips and kissed them with a reverence which was almost chilling. This was not what she had expected. Had she played her trump in vain?

He rose, abruptly.

"You have helped me," he said, "more than you can

know. My lower nature was getting the best of me. You have made me ashamed. I will in future try to deserve your praise. At the present moment I am entirely unworthy of it. I would be most abysmally unworthy of it were I remotely to entertain the thought of accepting such a sacrifice from you. No, dearest, after what you have said to me just now you are safe in this house as if I were a babe in the cradle. God bless you."

He left the room abruptly, and the lady stared after him, frowning, an angry light in her eyes. Had she over-shot her mark? Had he called her bluff? Or was he really the hopeless simpleton his words made him out to be. She smiled, reminiscently. No, he was not a hopeless simpleton. She sighed contentedly. She would wait.

Guido was more deeply stirred than he had ever been in all his life. For several days he was in a state verging on a quasi-religious frenzy of admiration for the woman who would have sacrificed her virtue in order to serve him. In time the inevitable reaction set in, and the fever that burned in his veins drove him almost insane. To sit with her at table through three meals a day excoriated him. To come home from college into the silent apartment empty save for himself and her was torment unendurable. Her presence saturated the rooms. It had stamped itself upon everything by the subtle perfume which enveloped her and trailed behind her and heralded her approach and emanated from her. Frequently he came home to find that she had been in his room. Never did any tangible token, such as a kerchief, or a bit of embroidery floss remain behind; only the heavy, seductive, insinuating Oriental perfume which must forever remain indissolubly associated with his recollections of her, pervaded his room and cruelly chastized his demoralized nerves.

Her behavior during these days was that of innocence itself, her smile and her eyes were the smile and the eyes of a madonna.

He began to fancy himself in love with her. She now appeared to him to be the noblest of women. Virtue? As he was not a sensualist, it did not occur to him to suspect that a woman willing to bestow the priceless gift of her virtue upon himself possibly might have bestowed it elsewhere previously. Her words, he thought, were proof of

her nobility; her conduct corroborated it. He began to scheme for marriage.

He asked her whether or not she knew the whereabouts of her husband. She did not appear to perceive his drift at first.

"No—he deserted me. I thought I told you that. I shall make no effort to trace him. I am thankful he has gone out of my life. In five years he will be legally dead and then I shall be free."

"Five years will be a long time for us to wait," said Guido, boldly.

She feigned amazement the most complete.

"My dear boy, it's not to be thought of. I thought I had made that plain. I am too old for you, oh, much too old. And through no fault of my own I have been brought into close contact with the seamy side of life. But she whom you marry must be spotless—spotless as the driven snow."

"But ignorance does not constitute purity," said the boy. "You hint at horrible things, I cannot conceive what they are. But they have left you pure and good and noble and self-sacrificing. Where shall I find such another?"

She began to weep. She rarely indulged herself in the luxury of tears. The unaccustomed exhibition frightened him.

"What's up?" he asked. They were alone in the house, and the couch on which they were sitting invited confidences. His arm, as she continued to weep, went reassuringly around her waist.

"Dearest," he said, "dearest Erna, have I said anything to hurt you?"

Her tears ceased abruptly.

"I am wicked," she said. "I am full of iniquity. I am not good and pure and cold as you are."

"Cold——" he laughed bitterly.

"I love you," she said, "and I have known the fullness of love. You are a saint."

"Not without marriage," he said.

"Not with," said she.

"I honor you."

"I know that."

"I wish to continue to honor you."

"And you would."

"I've always thought," said the boy, "that mutual loss of respect——"

"All that is nonsense," said she.

"I believe—I shall perish if I do not kiss you."

"Kiss me," she said. "I have felt so for a week."

But he did not obey her, and when she sought silently to bend his will to hers, he resisted her. Finally she took his face between her hands and kissed him upon his half-open mouth. He moaned, and as his head slipped upon her bosom, his arms encircled her convulsively.

"Oh," he whispered, "paradise."

"Paradise," she said, "is yours for the asking."

The boy staggered blindly to his feet. Horrible wrenchings, like the severing of tissue, tore at him. He went to the door. At the threshold he turned and looked back at her. Then, with a sound like a sob, he went back to her and fell upon his knees at her feet. She was standing, silent and erect. He encircled her with his arms, and pressed his face against her body, his hands and mouth strangely quiescent.

He lifted his haggard face to hers.

"Erna," he said, "we must find your husband, or, if we cannot find him we must wait. But you will marry me, won't you, when you are free?"

This gave her another opening for her horrible eloquence, her specious pleading. Under the guise of saving his honor, his virtue, his morality, she drained into the boy's ears and mind the demoralizing poison which she knew so well how to distill. It was a ghastly comedy which she enacted, a comedy which Cleopatra, which Messalina herself could not have bettered.

Entirely unnerved, throbbing in every nerve, desire lashed to the point of madness and held in check only by his inherited impetus towards decency, the boy left her abruptly.

He realized at last that his morality was in a precarious condition. The elemental passions which slumber in every heart had gained an almost complete ascendancy over his spiritual nature. He was willing to continue the unequal fight, to struggle on and be brave, but he likened himself to a man who has been deprived of his weapons.

He did not know where to turn for support. He cursed the System of No-Bias.

In his extremity he bethought himself of Dobronov, and went to see him the next afternoon.

He found Sergius Ivanovich, who lived up four flights of ill-smelling stairs in the rear of a tenement house, busy cooking. Around his table sat a woman and four, poorly clad, emaciated children. The children were watching Dobronov with hungry, greedy eyes as he stirred the thickening into a savory lamb stew which was simmering on the top of one of the small oil stoves designed primarily for heating and not for cooking purposes.

"It will be ready in five minutes," Dobronov said to the woman in Russian. "Is the table set? Are there enough knives, forks, plates?"

There were not enough plates.

"Guido Guidovich," Dobronov appealed to his astonished friend. "Go downstairs, two flights down, front, and ask Mrs. Gallagher to lend me a couple of large plates."

Guido, upon rapping at the door of the indicated apartment, was ushered into a room which beggars description. Babies, three or four, and all very dirty, especially around the mouth, clothes, dishes, saucepans, coal scuttles, potato parers, clothes-ringers, freshly ironed clothes, the entire equipment of housekeeping, in brief, lay about the room in conglomerate confusion.

Guido delivered Dobronov's message to the little woman who told him she was Mrs. Gallagher, and was handed two chipped plates which were so badly charred that they were black to the very rim.

"There's nothing in this flat Mr. Dobbiduff cannot have for the asking," she assured Guido. "God bless him. You're a friend of his, sir? Well, that's what I've suspected right along. He's not our sort. Quality tells, I say. And kind, sir! There's not another like him. I'm a widow woman, and when my little boy was down with infantile paralysis, I think he would all have died of starvation but for Mr. Dobbiduff."

Guido thought this over as he climbed up the dark stairs, cracked plates in hand.

"I never suspected you of this sort of thing, Sergius Ivanovich," he said, after the family of emigrants had

been served, and he and Dobronov had sought the comparative privacy of the corner of the room behind the stove.

Dobronov looked supremely foolish.

"Guido Guidovich," he said, "I do not believe in charity, I distinctly disapprove of it. Understand clearly that I believe suffering and privation are the best disciplinarians in the world. For one's soul. But the poor suffering flesh is weak. I am so constituted, my friend, that when I see others, especially children, hungry, I suffer quite as acutely as if hunger were gnawing at my own entrails. I cannot suffer all the time. It is too much to ask of anyone. And so it happens that I succumb quite frequently to the temptation of helping others." He paused a moment and then said quite seriously: "To expiate my fault I will this evening deprive myself of my evening meal."

Guido shook his head in wonderment.

"Sergius Ivanovich," he said, "you are the most unselfish creature that ever happened. Your flesh weak! I wonder what you will say to me when I tell you how weak I am and have been."

Dobronov regarded Guido searchingly. After a while he asked:

"Is it a woman?"

Guido nodded. After a long pause, during which Dobronov regarded him with a look so surcharged with tenderness that it was almost maternal, Guido said, explosively:

"I'm mad for her, Sergius Ivanovich. And I am at the end of my endurance. If you cannot help me—you who are the kindest and the finest soul I know—I am done for. And I do not wish to be done for."

Dobronov said very earnestly:

"Guido Guidovich, I cannot help you. There is only one who can help you and that is God. Pray—it is your one hope of salvation."

"I cannot pray," said Guido. "I have never been taught to pray. I do not believe in prayer."

"That does not matter in the least. Down upon your knees, my friend, and, believe me, the gift of prayer will come, and you will rise from your knees strengthened and heartened. It may be particularly hard for you to pray at

a time when your spiritual nature is overlaid with the dross of animal passion. But pray, nevertheless. Pray, I say. It is your only hope."

"My spiritual nature is not merely overlaid, it is engulfed," said Guido. "I am a brute. And she is a saint. And I wish that I were dead."

Dobronov's visitors had finished their first helping of the stew, and the youngest child was clamoring for more. The mother was trying to restrain the little one's impatience. Dobronov, on discovering the reason of the child's querulousness, took up the huge pot and helped all his visitors to another plateful. When he was through, the pot was empty.

"We had better go now," he said to Guido. "We can continue our talk in the park." Turning to the woman, he said, pointing to a huge pile of bedding and blankets in the corner of the room:

"My neighbors have generously helped me out. Lock the door after we are gone. I will not sleep here to-night."

"Where are you going to sleep," Guido asked Dobronov, as they made their way to the park.

"In the park," Dobronov replied, briefly.

"No, no, Sergius Ivanovich. You must come home with me."

"You forget. I must expiate. To sleep in one of your mother's comfortable beds would be further self-indulgence."

In vain Guido expostulated with him. Dobronov, after declining his friend's invitation repeatedly, became angry.

"Guido Guidovich," he said, "you are a delightful boy and I am very fond of you. But my soul is my soul and not yours, and I must discipline it as I see fit."

"I wish you would discipline mine," said Guido, laughing.

"No one can discipline your soul excepting yourself. Once more, pray, pray, pray, until you feel that you have overcome temptation."

They had reached the park and found themselves a bench. Dobronov then continued:

"The temptation which is troubling you, Guido Guidovich, is the universal temptation of mankind. All the other commandments of our Saviour most of us wouldn't think

of breaking any more than we would think of breaking our neighbor's windows. Take yourself. You do not lie, you do not steal, you do not murder, you do not bear false witness, you honor her whom you call mother and will some day, I think, learn to honor her who is your mother as well. You overflow with the milk of human kindness and would harm no one. But you are by no means certain that you will be able to obey the remaining commandment: 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.'

"There is small doubt in my mind, Guido Guidovich, that all men and women at some point of their lives are in danger of breaking this commandment. It cannot be otherwise. Nature is strong within us. We make concessions to it in the form of marriage and divorce, but, having admitted the legality of any concession, we are prone to stretch that concession further and yet further until it includes illicit as well as legalized love. And again I say to you, pray, pray, pray—it is your only hope."

Guido left his former tutor feeling as he always did after having been with Dobronov, that he had been in the presence of a spirit almost Christ-like in its simplicity and passionate devotion to the religious ideal. But Dobronov had not helped him. So, at least, Guido thought.

He felt a strange unwillingness to go home that evening. His mother, he knew, would rush through supper and dart off again upon one of the numerous errands which, since her days were entirely occupied, she was now forced to attend to in the evening. And an evening alone with Erna, in his present mood, could come to no good. Instead of going home, he went to Otto's. There had lately been a lull in the hostilities between Otto and himself, and he felt at liberty to drop in at suppertime as he had formerly done.

Tante Baumgarten, puffing and very red and smelling deliciously of fresh pie, opened the door for Guido. A "girl," like a house in Bismarck Street, were luxuries beyond the reach of the Baumgartens at the present moment.

"Otto is upstairs, go right up," she said, and then, calling him back, exclaimed, "*Ach, Guidochen!*"

He saw that she wished to speak to him confidentially, and came down the half-flight of stairs which he had ascended.

"*Guidochen,*" she lowered her voice, "*Guidochen,* you

must not mind my asking—but you are not getting mixed up with that woman, are you?”

Guido turned crimson. How did Tante Baumgarten come to suspect him and Erna, when his own mother had given no sign of suspicion? Unconsciously he fenced for time in which to collect his scattered wits. He said:

“Which woman?”

“*Frau Theaterdirektor*, of course.”

Guido heaved a sigh of tremendous relief. He had forgotten all about the episode which had caused him such qualms of conscience only a little while ago. How puerile and childish it seemed now.

“You know, *Guidochen*,” Tante Baumgarten continued, “I did not dare tell my husband about that—about her—you—— He would have forbidden Otto to have anything more to do with you. You don’t see her often, do you?”

“I give you my word,” said Guido, “that I have seen her just one single time since—then. And then we met on the street, quite by chance.”

“*Ach, ich wusst’ es ja!* You’ll stay for supper?”

Guido found Otto working over a technical translation which, he explained, was one of a series. The series, he expected, would aggregate a sum equal to or exceeding in amount the sum loaned him by Frau Ursula and Guido.

“What’s the matter,” he asked abruptly. “You’re looking a little peaked lately. Not well?”

“Perfectly,” said Guido.

Otto looked at him sharply and resumed his work.

“You can talk to me,” he said, “I am merely correcting my work. Do you know, I am glad you came in to-night. We haven’t seen much of each other lately. I’ve lots to tell you. Never told you, did I, that a worthless woman came near making a fool of me?”

This seemed so apposite to the matter in Guido’s mind that the boy reddened.

“That so?” he asked, indifferently.

“Yes. Queer thing, human nature. A fellow can be in love with one girl, really love her you know, and yet get tangled up with another woman. I caught myself in time. So no harm’s done. Thought you might be interested.”

Otto rose, flung his pen down on the table and came and stood in front of his friend. Only then did it dawn on

Guido that Otto had divined what was troubling him, and was taking these means to extend the hand of fellowship.

"There's only one thing a fellow can do to avert a disaster like that," he said. "He has got to work hard. The harder the better."

"But how can one concentrate?" Guido flung out sharply.

"Force oneself to. It was hard work. But my education was at stake. I never would have accomplished all I did this year, I think, if I had not been on the run before the Scarlet Letter."

But neither Dobronov's adherence to Mary's methods, or Otto's advocacy of Martha's, struck Guido as meeting the crying need of his own problem. Of this he felt sure as he walked home after supper.

As he approached his home he saw a familiar, slender, boyish figure coming down the stoop. He recognized Egon von Dammer and whistled to attract his attention.

"Hello, Guido. I won't say I'm sorry you weren't home, because I'm not. I spent a most entertaining evening with the lady. She says she is your mother's *Stuetse*. I never saw one like her before. I'm crazy about her. But she is as frigid as an icicle."

"Frigid!" Guido exclaimed involuntarily.

Egon gave him a sharp look.

"So," he said, and concluded his sentence with a jocularly couched accusation. Guido denied the accusation. Egon thereupon accused him of lying like a gentleman. But Guido's asseverations of Edna's innocence finally convinced Egon, and he offered to introduce Guido to some girls whom he and the *Leutnant zur See* were "protecting." Highsteppers. Very discreet. Very select. Ran their apartment on the London plan. And he explained what he meant by "the London plan." Nature would not be denied. To deny nature was to court serious illness. On and on he rambled, succulently enjoying his reminiscences and basking in iniquities to come.

Guido listened in silence. He was abashed and ashamed. He did not want to discuss matters such as these with Egon. All his old mistrust revived. Finally he got away from his former school-mate and walked up the stairs

abjectly contrite, and virtuously determined to follow in the footsteps of Otto and Dobronov.

Meanwhile matters between himself and Erna were fast coming to a head. The crisis occurred a few evenings later when Frau Ursula, after supper, went off to her dressmaker's, again leaving the two young people alone in the house. Frau Ursula, like many an excellent woman before her, displayed a blindness which was well-nigh criminal throughout the entire period of Guido's ordeal.

Guido went to his room immediately and closed the door. He had forgotten one of his books in the dining-room and went to fetch it. Returning, the light from Erna's room beckoned him invitingly. The shining femininity of the room raked over the smouldering embers in the boy's heart. The blood beat madly in his temples and the yearning to touch Erna's hand and her glorious hair and the miraculously soft skin became well-nigh unendurable.

She heard him stop at the threshold and came to the door.

She was wearing a kimono of flesh-colored satin, embroidered in white silk with a wisteria design. She had a lot of finery of this sort which, she told Frau Ursula, had been given her by her husband in the early days of their marriage. She looked enchantingly, bewitchingly beautiful. The boy stood looking at her as man dying of thirst may look at the water which he must not touch because lethal germs of some sort lurk in it. The germ which this woman's beauty contained was far more fatal than typhoid and, as Dobronov would have phrased it, it was far more universal.

Erna Gottschalk impersonated in Guido's life the Lure of Sex. Let him overcome this temptation and no other woman would have power over him. Let him succumb and he would be forced from the broad highway of truth into the innumerable by-lanes of mendacity, deception and equivocation which undermine and sap the moral stamina.

She came forward slowly and extended her hand. The sinuous grace of the serpent was hers. Guido, hardly aware of his responsive action, laid his hand in hers. She drew him into the room, smiling at him all the while, with eyes drooping and heavy as from vigils and tears. She closed the door gently behind him, and then, still without speak-

ing, opened her arms to him. The boy crept into her embrace, and laid his head against her shoulder and fell to sobbing in her arms like a frightened tired child. She soothed him, kissing his eyes and lips and brow. Suddenly her caresses ceased. Her head tilted back and upwards.

"Guido, pull yourself together, your mother has come back."

She jerked him to his feet.

"Quick," she whispered, and the next minute she had pushed him into her wardrobe and had closed the door upon him. It was a very large wardrobe, almost as large as a small-sized room, and he could stand in it quite comfortably.

All about him were her scented and perfumed dresses, and the succulence of the perfume, to which was added the more pungent and delicate fragrance of her skin, oppressed him like the fumes of an opiate, producing in him a state bordering on delirium.

He heard his mother's voice in Erna's room.

"Is Guido in his room or has he gone out?"

"I cannot say," Erna's voice replied in accents cool and sweet as a church-bell. "He spoke of going out for a walk. But I do not know whether he has already gone."

"I forgot to tell him about to-morrow night—there's an entertainment of the Red Cross and I don't want him to make any other engagement."

"Shall I tell him when he comes in?"

"I'll see if he is in his room."

A moment later the wardroom door was noiselessly but swiftly opened.

"Quick," said Erna, "you've been out for a short constitutional. Without a cap. Run into the hall and open and close the front door. Quick. Don't blunder."

Guido occupied the large hall-room off the parlor at the front of the house. Erna's room was directly opposite the hall-door, so that Guido had ample time to obey her injunctions before his mother returned from her visit to his room. The front door closed noisily behind him just as his mother stepped across the threshold of the room into the hall.

"Guido—it is too early in the season to go out without

an overcoat and a cap. To-morrow night——" and she told him details about the Red Cross entertainment.

The hall was dark and she was in too much of a hurry to notice his confusion. She went out again directly, closing the door behind her a little noisily, so great was her haste.

"Guido," said Erna, "are you badly frightened? You poor boy."

He did not answer her. To his amazement he brushed past her, and walked straight to his own room. She followed him, facing him across the threshold.

"It may seem a little thing to do," he said, "but I've never deceived my mother before."

"Really——?"

"You mean—all these weeks. Well, perhaps I did. I suppose I did. Yes, of course, I did. But it has got to stop."

The lady stepped boldly across the threshold.

"Dear boy," she said, "consider. It's an elemental force. And we are pygmies. Why attempt the impossible? Why oppose yourself to the universal law?"

"You mean, don't you, why oppose myself to the divine law, as I have been doing?"

In saying this, he felt like a hypocrite. He, the agnostic, the unbeliever, the non-Christian, speaking of a "divine law."

She smiled. Her tremulous lips moved softly, sweetly, as if she were enunciating words without giving them ice.

"My hero is annoyed," she said, with a sort of proud humility. "He desires to be alone. Therefore I will leave him. Good-night, dear boy—and pleasant dreams!"

He wanted to call her back, or to follow her, for again her baleful beauty had cast its spell upon him. But, miraculously, his virtuous resolution held.

"I wish," he said, viciously, "I wish I'd been brought up with a Bias. I wish I'd been brought up to believe in hell-fire. I wish I were afraid of hell-fire. I wish I were so afraid of it that I would never dare do a thing without first considering whether it would not land me in the heart of the infernal holocaust."

He caught up his pillow and sent it swirling through the

room. As it left his hand, the intoxicating perfume in which Erna steeped herself disentangled itself from it. He recovered it, holding it to his face, avidly inhaling its lush fragrance.

"Her head has lain against my pillow," he thought, and promptly buried his own face in it. Then, as another gust of indignant fury shook him, he hurled the pillow away again.

Disconsolately he sat down on his bed. Thought seemed inhibited, will-power paralyzed. He was torn and wrenched as he had never been torn and wrenched before.

"How self-possessed and competent she was," he thought, but her self-possession and her competence failed to arouse his admiration. He despised her for her efficient handling of an oblique situation.

"I've got to have this thing out," he said, suddenly, speaking aloud. "I've got to have it out with myself. I don't believe in prayer. I don't believe in heaven. I don't believe in immortality. I'm not sure whether I believe in God or not. Then, if God is the main prop of virtue, and hell-fire, the main incentive to keep a fellow straight, what the mischief does morality concern me?"

"It's beastly, of course," he went on, "to have to deceive my mother. It would be just as beastly not to deceive her. Better do the horrid thing which, at least, is kind.

"If sin is merely a contravention of convention, then where's the harm?"

"If some folks outgrow their religion, cannot others outgrow childishly narrow beliefs in middle-class morality?"

That phrase, he thought, was a borrowed phrase incorporating a borrowed idea. What of it, since it suited his present need? But did it?

"Of course," he went on, "it hurts like the dickens to cast aside the beliefs you've been brought up in. But then, I was not really brought up in any beliefs. I don't think my mother ever told me that this sort of thing was wrong." Then, suddenly, he remembered his mother's indignation with Hauser for his false suspicion of herself, and it made him realize anew how hateful, how monstrous was the thing which he was so coldly and speculatively arguing about with himself.

"Of course," he said, vehemently, as yet another thought

struck him, "if I do this thing, I've got to lie—I've got to fall into the habit of practicing deception and subterfuge. And I should hate to do that like the mischief.

"Oh, the whole business of love is sheer misery. After all, I find I have certain beliefs. Where I got them from I do not know. But there they are, and they have got to be reckoned with. I suppose this is the way a man feels while outgrowing his religion—narrow creeds, silly dogmas, laughable doctrines. I believe my conception of right and wrong is just as narrow, silly and provincial.

"Even Sergius Ivanovich admits that a man cannot go on suffering eternally. Anyhow, I don't believe he ever felt the way I am feeling to-night. I don't believe Otto did either. They're better than I am. Still, they may have felt the same way. I'm not the sole representative of an unique species.

"If sin is to be shunned only because of its consequences—then, do you not make sin sinless when you immunize it?

"And marriage, as Sergius Ivanovich says, it's a concession to the flesh, also. If not one concession, then why not another. That's not the way he put it. But then he's not outgrown the A B C of religion. He's out dogma-hunting every day of his life."

The boy sat very still. His outburst had done him good. He had not meant half he had said and he knew it. But his words had cleared the deck for main action.

"There's nothing," he said, again speaking aloud, "there's nothing in the wide world to prevent me from going out of that door and down the hall into her room. Nothing at all. Just a handful of old wives' prejudices."

Again he sat very still. He regarded the panels of the door fixedly, as if they were a magic glass through which he could look right into the Paradise of Sensuous Delight which was his for the claiming.

"One thing's certain," he said, "I've got to get out of this house to-night. And I've got to make up my mind definitely. I'm at the parting of the ways. And I'm not going to be swept off my feet by anything or by anyone, neither by passion nor by a woman."

He went to his book-case and selected two books which he slipped into the pockets of his coat. It was characteristic

of him that even in this moment of stress and duress he should remember to write a note to his mother.

While writing, he was struck forcibly, as by something wholly new, by the absolute faith his mother reposed in him. He was entirely free to come and to go as he pleased. His letters were inviolate. Even as a child he had never been asked to show either the letters which he wrote or the letters which he received. If he chose to remain at a friend's house—Otto's or Stan's, for the night—he had only to telephone home and tell his mother not to expect him. Unless he volunteered information concerning his reasons for staying away, which he usually did, Frau Ursula never interrogated or questioned him.

The thought of her faith in him, as he saw it, came to him like a benediction.

He left the note on his mother's bed, and then walked stealthily down the hall. Erna heard him, however, and, as he approached her door, she stepped into the hall and barred the way.

"Are you going out?" she asked.

"As you see."

She stretched out her hand to him, but a look of stern and rigid determination in the young face made her drop it again without having touched him. Bowing, he walked around her and out of the house.

He stood for fully five minutes on the stoop, drinking in the cool, clean night-air. There was a slight mist, and the moisture-laden air was grateful to cheek and brow.

He had no very clear conception of what he was going to do. So he strolled aimlessly down Bismarck Street. Then, following a sudden impulse, he turned down Chestnut Street, with its quaint, old-fashioned houses, all set far back in little gardens, and walked slowly to the Geddes home. He longed to go in to ask for a night's lodging, to sleep under the same room as Janet. But he lacked the moral hardihood to do this. He had barely visited any of his friends since the beginning of his quasi-intimacy with Erna, and to have Janet's clear guileless eyes fixed upon him that evening was, he felt, more than he deserved on the one hand, and on the other, more than he could endure. He tried to cling to the thought of Janet, to visualize her image, to recall the sound of her voice. But he did not succeed

very well. His passion for Erna had mounted too high. He could not cast out Erna with Janet, as he wished to do.

He walked back to Bismarck Street. Stan's window was brilliantly lighted, but Guido passed the house without a thought of ringing the bell. To come in contact at the moment with Stan's Episcopalian orthodoxy would have been as painful as an encounter with Otto's Lutheran self-sufficiency or even Dobronov's itinerant heterodoxy. And suddenly he knew whither he was bound. Dr. Koenig, unbeliever yet moral, non-sectarian yet humanitarian, must be his host that night.

His step became lighter, more self-confident, as he walked rapidly down Bismarck Street to the large rambling house at the corner of Tamarack Street, where Dr. Koenig still lived. The character of the neighborhood was deteriorating more and more rapidly, but Dr. Koenig would not forsake his old home. In it he had lived the greater part of his life, and in it he intended to die.

It was Dr. Koenig's habit to read every night until twelve or one, and Guido found him seated in front of a roaring grate fire, book in hand.

"Well," he said, as Guido came into the room, "what gives me the pleasure of seeing you so late in the evening? Nothing wrong, I hope?"

"No. Nothing wrong," Guido replied, adding hurriedly: "Dr. Koenig, will you put me up for the night?"

"Why, of course——" The old physician seemed about to ask a question, but checked himself. "Sit down," he said. "Thank you."

Guido drew up a chair opposite to Dr. Koenig, not too near the crackling fire, and lapsed into silence. Now that he was here, he regretted having come. A sudden gale of passion surged frenziedly through his veins. He forced himself into a quieter mood, and awoke from his reverie with the sensation that he had been spoken to repeatedly.

"Pardon me, *Herr Doktor*, did you speak?"

"Look here, my boy. Something is wrong. Can I help you? In any way? Youth is beset by temptations—I was young myself once—remember I am a friend as well as your physician."

"I came here because you are a friend, the only friend to whom I could have turned," Guido said, speaking slowly.

"But you cannot help me—excepting by keeping me under your roof for the night. There is something I have got to thrash out myself. I do not need your advice. I know what it would be without asking. It's the same advice I gave myself when I ran away from—when I ran away and came here."

He paused and then said, spasmodically:

"Dr. Koenig, I know you are not much of a church-goer. You are, I think, a freethinker. Do you believe that things are elementally and fundamentally or merely relatively right or wrong?"

Dr. Koenig frowned.

"I am a disciple of both Haeckel and Spencer," he began, employing his favorite formula. "With Spencer I believe that all human knowledge is relative and cannot be otherwise. The absolute is beyond our ken. Consequently right and wrong are relative conceptions."

"And conscience?"

"An abstraction. A spiritual complex composed of rules concerning human behavior which, if observed by all, guarantees the welfare of all."

"You call conscience a 'spiritual complex,'" Guido said, thoughtfully. "In doing that do you not tacitly admit that it has its origin not in relative human knowledge but in absolute divine knowledge?"

"By no means," the old physician responded. "How should absolute divine knowledge percolate into our relative human consciousness? To think so would be illogical. As a Spencerian I believe that the Absolute, the Ultimate Reality is unknowable. So, like a wise man, I do not bother my head about it."

"But," Guido interposed, "all the great religious teachers, Jesus, Moses, Buddha Confucius, Mahomet taught virtually the same system of ethics. Does this not indicate that these men were divinely inspired or commissioned?"

"You are very illogical to-night," said the old doctor, quite crossly. "It indicates no such thing. If a child shows a great aptitude for writing, is it therefore divinely inspired? Mozart, at eleven, composed a symphony. He was a musical prodigy. Granted. There have been mathematical prodigies as well. Now, according to my ideas, Jesus, Buddha, Confucius, Mahomet evolved virtually the same

system of ethics because they were sociological prodigies. They understood sociology instinctively, just as other prodigies understand music or mathematics or mechanics instinctively. Hudson has pointed this out."

He had spoken with considerable feeling because the drift of Guido's questions seemed to indicate that the Great Synthetic Experiment, which was to be an epoch-making event in the history of the world, was going to end disastrously then and there. It was a catastrophe he would not wish to survive. If Guido were to tamely embrace the tenets of the Lutheran or of the Presbyterian or of the Methodist Church, it would be a dire misfortune second only to seeing the boy embroiled in party politics and becoming primarily a Republican or a Democrat. The excellent old man rode two hobbies. He was a freethinker and a believer in democracy, and being human, it had been his cherished dream ever since Frau Ursula had apprized him of the projected Synthesis, to have the boy, on reaching years of discretion, turn into the trail which he himself had followed. He had scrupulously refrained from trying to impose his own opinions on the boy. He had done this for two reasons. He had done it, in the first place, because he was a man of honor and a good sportsman and believed in fair play. In the second place, to see the unbiased youth entirely of his own volition and out of the fullness of his own judgment embrace the identical, political, philosophical and ethical doctrines which he himself held, would, in a way, vindicate those doctrines and prove their invulnerability.

"Then," said Guido, "if we lie or steal we are merely breaking a man-made law?"

The doctor became uneasy. He had rarely seen anyone as hard-driven as was this boy.

"Surely," he thought, "he hasn't forged a check or put his name to a false affidavit."

He said:

"The 'merely man-made law' becomes second nature to the honorable man. Because this is so, the religious denominations arrogate to themselves the fictitious function of being the mediators between man and his soul."

"And if a man kills another man, is there nothing but

the cumulative experience of the race in usage and expediency to stamp his act as wrong?"

A horrid fear contracted the old man's heart.

"He has murdered someone," he thought. "This is what he has been leading up to. I must help him for his own and for his mother's sake. Hauser, perhaps. Great heavens! What new outrage has Hauser been guilty of to goad the luckless lad to murder? I must get him away. Unhappy boy! It's his maternal heritage."

And he added, also in thought, in thought explosive and disruptive:

"So this is the end of the Great Synthesis."

He said quite calmly, quite judicially:

"In my estimation there are times when murder is justifiable."

The boy started. He thought of Varvara Alexandrovna.

"I do not think I could ever take that view," he said, quite simply.

The doctor fumed and fussed over the fire. Here he had done cruel violence to his standard of ethics for the express purpose of making confession easy for the lad, only to have the boy administer a reprimand in return. In his mortification he overlooked the magnitude of his relief in knowing that Guido was innocent of blood-shed.

Said Guido:

"And adultery? Is the prohibition of that also due merely to man's socialized protective instinct?"

"So," thought the doctor, "it's only a woman. The little fool. To half-scare me out of my wits about nothing." Then, remembering that a woman is sometimes fatal to a man's career, fear entered his heart anew, and he tried to frame a fitting reply.

"Most assuredly," he said. He stopped, fearing he had been too emphatic. The boy probably had gone wrong, and had come to him for advice of some sort. Possibly for medical advice. He was probably half-mad with remorse. All sorts of suspicions flitted phantom-wise through the doctor's mind. Well—the sin was common. He must help the lad to get straightened out, and to do that he must first of all gain his confidence and not frighten him by assuming the high and mighty air of virtue militant and infallible.

"Most assuredly," he repeated, quite mildly. "Perceive how leniently the laws of civilized communities deal with infractions of this particular 'religious commandment.' They allow personal redress in the form of divorce. And there the matter ends, excepting that some states, as an attempt at a punitive measure, refuse to legalize a future union which the guilty party might wish to contract."

"You do not think it very bad?" Guido inquired.

"Ah," thought the doctor. "The poor wretch. He needs a little more encouragement before unbosoming himself to me. He shall have it. I do hope he hasn't got himself mixed up with that dreadful *Theaterdirektorin*."

He said:

"My dear boy. You know your Shakespeare by heart. Do you remember what he said about lovers? They ought all to be clapped into jail, were it feasible, which it is not, because the crime of being in love is so common that the jailers themselves are guilty. Well, it is much the same with the offense which you have named. It is so common, at least among our sex, that, were all men incarcerated who at one time or other have been guilty of the offense, less than one per cent of the male population would be at large."

"It seems unfair to the women, doesn't it?" inquired the amazing Guido. "It cannot be pleasant for a girl to marry a man who has transgressed. Now, can it?"

"The devil," thought the doctor. "If it isn't that that's ailing him, what is?" He said, gruffly:

"I dare say the average woman thinks her husband the hundredth man."

"I think," said Guido, coolly, "I'd hate to be any but the hundredth man."

This was too much for the old physician. For the second time, confident that he was doing the boy an incalculable service, he had professed a standard of morality far lower than the one he had adhered to all his life, only to be called to order by the supposed malefactor. The old man puffed and snorted quite angrily, but he said nothing.

Yet he had done the boy a better turn than he knew.

The specific opinions which the old physician had posited, had brought Guido's emotions into focus.

"You've helped me enormously, *Herr Doktor*," he said,

"and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your kindness in letting me talk to you and for putting me up for the night."

The room to which the old servant, who, like the house, had been in Dr. Koenig's possession for over fifty years, led him, was located on the top floor and gave out upon the street. Guido had slept in this room for a fortnight when a child while under close observation by the doctor. He remembered the room and every incident of his sojourn in it distinctly. The wall-paper was the same. So was the huge four-poster, with counterpane of pink chintz. So was the old, faded carpet, the marble-topped bureau and table and the mid-Victorian, slightly rickety chairs.

He felt oddly at home in this room which he had not entered from that day to this. The air was stuffy, and having lighted the gas, Guido threw open the window. Then, with a smile as inscrutable as Yomanato's, he pulled from his pockets the two books with which he had supplied himself at home. He handled these books gently, almost reverently. He smiled as he laid them down. He had not brought them because he intended to read them but, because, in having them about his person he felt that he had a double talisman which would protect him against the magic of soft, round arms, the witchery of cherry-red lips and foam-white bosom.

The one book was the New Testament. The other was the Gospel of Buddha.

The dreadful tumult in his veins had subsided. The fever in his temples still burned, but he felt that that, too, was dying now. He turned down the gas and sat down at the open window. Already he felt calmer, saner, cleaner.

Somewhere in a café or a dance-hall a violin, a flute and a mandolin were making sweet music. The melody floated toward him in broken snatches with the elusive, eerie charm of incompletely apprehended things. He was content to sit thus for a little while, mind and body quiescent and free at last from the unbelievable strain which Erna's mere proximity exerted upon them.

Suddenly, quite suddenly and abruptly, he said:

"Odd, that I never thought of that before—what it must mean to a man's wife."

He thought of Janet, unaware that the preceding train of thought had brought her to mind.

There fell another spell of quiescence. And then, again with sudden abruptness, he said:

"The funny part is that I do not want to do this thing. My true self, my ego, I suppose I ought to call it, did not want to do it. My senses wanted to, but I didn't. That's the situation in a nutshell. And it was not fear that deterred me, because the law cannot touch me and religion has no terrors for me. It was simply that my innermost, my really and truly self resisted and balked and restrained my outward self."

He rose, feeling strangely excited and exhilarated. He felt that he had stumbled upon a big idea.

"It's all very well," he said, "to say all our knowledge is relative and cannot be otherwise than relative. I believe that, of course. In a way. But this thing that has happened to me isn't a matter of material knowledge—it's not an idea, or a thought. It's very plainly a feeling, an emotion, but the emotion is ultra-physical, it's incorporeal and spiritual, it's due to something residing in me which I do not comprehend, something shadowy and vague and yet more real, more true, more intrinsically my own than anything else I possess.

"I wonder whether conscience covers it. Perhaps I'm just magnifying my sense of conscience. No—I'm not. My conscience told me right along that I was on the wrong road, and was in hazard of a worse road. But my conscience never blazed up the way this thing did. It was—it was almost as if a divine light had descended upon me——" he stopped short and ended with, "I wonder if that's blasphemy."

"At any rate, whatever it is, it's saved me. I'm secure now. I'm secure because I know that however great temptation is, it is only my outward shell that is being tempted, my inner self, my true, real self is beyond temptation. It is high and dry above temptation."

He fell into a reverie. Chaotic thoughts and feelings sifted through his mind.

"I wonder," he said, striving to reduce the vast vagueness which filled his mind into something less chaotic,

"since my outer shell is a mere husk, why should my inner self, my true self, care so much about it?"

That, he felt, was a poser. He considered the thought from every angle. Dr. Koenig's contention flared up in his memory, illuminating the thought as Bengal lights illuminate a nocturnal landscape. Here was an explanation ready to hand. Why not accept it?

"Because it's not true," he said. "There's something more back of all this than the social experience of the race. I wasn't thminking of race, or society, or my mother, or Janet, or anything or anybody when I made up my mind that I just wouldn't! It was just a matter between myself and——" he stopped short for want of a noun or a pronoun with which to conclude.

"I don't like to say 'God,'" he assured himself, "because I do not believe in God. Now, I wonder. It's just possible I do. No—I can't. I simply can't believe in a God with a magnified, etherealized body. I cannot imagine God at any rate. I cannot even imagine him as truth or as love. Even love, no matter how clarified, carries with it a teleological concept. That's where Dr. Koenig's Ultimate Reality comes in. We cannot fashion any notion of it or of God. We simply cannot. What did Spinoza say? 'To define God is to deny him.' That is one of the doctor's favorite quotations, and it has the ring of truth. No, I cannot believe in God the way some people do who speak of God's love and God's truth and God's mercy and God's what-not other qualities. I refuse, absolutely, to define God."

This, it seemed, after a moment's hesitation, to leave him worse stranded than before. He cast about for succor, like a shipwrecked mariner. Suddenly a phrase that he had heard and forgotten and remembered again flashed upon him with the force of a revelation.

"The Divine Principle," he said, "the Divine Principle. That's non-specific, it's vague and it's magnificent. It is magnificent as it should be if it's to be a synonym for Jehovah."

He fell into one of his brief, swift spasms of abstraction that ended as swiftly as they began.

"I believe then in the Divine Principle," he said. "I do honestly believe in that. That and the Ultimate Reality

do not conflict. They are one and the same, or different manifestations of the same. At any rate, it was a ray from the Divine Principle that operated in me to-night. Doubtless it operates in anyone who will let it. Perhaps it was the overwhelming multiplicity of the Divine Principle that made the Christian Church reduce it to humanly intelligible terms by creating the Triune God.

"God," he said, after a pause, "God would be the Divine Principle, and the Holy Ghost would be the divine glimmer of light which shone even in me to-night. And Christ—well, Christ, of course, is Christ. Christ is the Bridge—the Logos. Christ needs no explaining. Christ explains himself."

He reverently stretched out his hand and touched first the New Testament and then the Buddhist Gospel.

"You, too, Buddha, you, too," he said, "saw the divine light. But to-night—forgive me—to-night Christ seems nearer."

Immediately he began to question himself why Christ should seem nearer. If Pastor Marlow had spoken to him of the Christian faith, Yomanato, of whom he had seen a good deal at odd times, had told him as much about the Buddhist faith. So that, in both instances, his reading was supplemented by word of mouth instruction.

Was it merely pressure of environment, or the telepathic influence of the legion of Christian souls that surrounded him which was causing him to turn to Christ instead of to Buddha? The latter thought fascinated him. He was a strong believer in the telepathic influence of mind upon mind. To it he ascribed the fact that he had grown up with an aversion of lying and stealing. His mother's ethics, he felt sure, had influenced him into right living.

But if his mother's ethical beliefs had influenced him in that way, why had she not telepathically influenced him into embracing the Lutheran faith, which was so dear to her heart?

"Because," he said, answering his own question, "the Divine Immanence in me inclined me to her influence in the matter of right and wrong, which matters, but not to the articles of faith which comprise her creed, and which do not matter.

He perceived very clearly that religion was not a matter

of creeds, or of dogma, or of prayer, or even of ethics, as he had hitherto believed. Religion consisted in that one little great thing which had happened to him to-night—in the ability to feel the Divine Presence, to commune with it, to have faith in it albeit without in the least comprehending it.

Perhaps, even without the telepathic influence of his mother and other surrounding souls, he would have been neither a thief nor a liar because of the Divine Immanence.

All his thoughts revolved about that great central sun.

His mind came back to the problem of Christ.

Why, since the ethics were the same, and the creed did not matter, had he turned to Christ in his extremity instead of to Buddha?

He was not willing to allow that problem to evade him, to go long unsolved. To perceive that it remained in abeyance irritated him immeasurably.

"Perhaps," he said, "it is because Christ was tempted just as all mortal flesh is tempted. The possibility of temptation entering into his life, although he did not yield to it, makes him so human, so comprehensible.

"He suffered, too, suffered in numerous ways. Those whom he trusted denied and betrayed him. Those whom he loved rejected him. Those whom he would have benefited denounced and traduced him. His humanity must have made him very susceptible to the pain involved in all this." And it seemed to the boy that the Church had never made enough of the anguish which Christ must have endured through finding his friends lukewarm or false or treacherous.

Then—the Crucifixion. Guido had never comprehended the attitude of Christianity toward the Final Sacrifice, and he did not believe that he understood the orthodox Christian attitude any better now than before. In fact, the orthodox interpretation, so far as he comprehended it, revolted him. But there came to his mind the recollection of one night when during one of the most sanguinary campaigns of the war, he had been seized with a violent desire to suffer in the place of others. What he had felt that evening was not a hysterical desire for self-immolation such as had actuated the early Christian martyrs. It was merely the feeling that to suffer would be more endurable than

to know of the suffering of others. Dobronov, when feeding the Russian emigrant woman and her children in full knowledge that, according to his lights, he must expiate the sin incurred in doing so—had been actuated by the same feeling.

It was this feeling, greatly purified and magnified, he thought, which had impelled Christ to sacrifice himself by suffering crucifixion. To make Christ's martyrdom the curtain of the third act of a pre-arranged drama, was to make Christ the central figure of a conspiracy which was a conspiracy no less because it had been incubated by the Deity. Christ submitted to crucifixion because he could have averted it only by repudiating his own teachings, and those teachings, of course, signified the lighting of the Inner Torch in souls which had not the power to light their own fires. To repudiate them would have been tantamount to pulling down the Bridge—to destroying the Logos.

Therefore, in an entirely different significance than that given to the Crucifixion by the Church, Christ has been crucified to compass the salvation of all who confess and follow him.

For Guido could not sufficiently constrict his horizon, could not cramp his nature enough to believe that the hope of salvation after death was the object of Christ's sacrifice. The belief in salvation by grace alone, with its possibility of a death-bed repentance at the close of a vicious and low life, repelled him as much as ever. It was, he thought, contrary to the dictates of sanity, for none can change his entire nature in a moment. As we live, so we are. This belief contradicted justice, for justice demands moral order and law and will not tolerate arbitrary favoritism in return for lip-service tardily yielded.

It was the possibility of salvation while in the flesh that had prompted Christ's sacrifice. It was because he stood for moral law and order that lying and cheating and stealing and murdering and adultery were abhorrent to him.

To regard adultery as a departure from moral order and not merely as an illicit indulgence of the flesh placed a new and tremendous emphasis on the necessity of eschewing it.

This would in part explain the earlier question propounded by himself. Why should the outer shell, which is

a mere husk, matter so much to the Indwelling Light? Every divergence from moral order would tend to dim the Indwelling Light, would tend to destroy and eliminate it or to reduce it to the Vanishing Point by gradual abrasion. And when that divergence from moral order was accompanied, as in adultery, by an indulgence in the animal passions, it was plain that the impetus toward a complete eclipse of the Indwelling Light was strengthened a hundred-fold.

Christ seemed near, so very near, because of his tremendous love for humanity. And Guido perceived with the utmost clarity of vision that the belief of the human heart in the sanctity of unselfish love is so ingrained that, try as one will, it is almost impossible to conceive Deity as existing without this attribute, teleological though the conception is.

And precisely in that, in his love for mankind, lay the prodigious significance of Christ, of the worship which he inspired throughout the Western world, of the fact that adoration of him, the Son, had almost completely supplanted adoration of God, the Father. It was Christ's love for humanity that made him so plausible, so self-explanatory, so self-evident, so omnipresent and close.

"I do not believe in God," he said, slowly, "at least not in the God of the Scriptures. I do believe in a Divine Principle. And most assuredly, overwhelmingly, I believe in Christ."

CHAPTER II

THE month of May ushered in a new era of the war. Both the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the use of gas at the First Battle of Ypres showed that the boasted ingenuity of the Germans in contriving frightful expedients for the elimination of human life, had by no means exhausted itself, and that, moreover, Germany had apparently retrograded to such a low level of moral apperception that she had become wholly incapable of discriminating between right and wrong.

With the sinking of the *Lusitania*, the entire United States, perhaps for the first time, was fully awakened to the unspeakable horror of Germany's crimes. Many there were who felt that it was pusillanimous of America to continue her aloofness from the War, and that, not so much because so and so many American lives had been extinguished when the *Lusitania* was torpedoed, but because of the stupendous horrors—the vaunted *Schrecklichkeit*—with which Germany very evidently wished to cow and terrorize the entire civilized world.

Neither the sinking of the *Lusitania* nor the revival of the ancient Chinese method of dealing death to the enemy by asphyxiation brought about a change of heart in the German-Americans who had been pro-German hitherto.

Wesendonck, in the course of one of his Sunday visits at the Professor's, explained with oily satisfaction that in using gas the Germans had merely availed themselves of a fact known to every artillery man. All big guns, when heavy cannonading was going on, exhaled poisonous gases generated by the salvoes of powder which sped the projectiles on their way. Why, then, blame the Germans for possessing the genius to utilize the lesson pointed by this circumstance? If the English were as clever, or the French as thorough as the Germans, they, and not the Germans would have thought of this new means of decimating

the ranks of the enemy. That the English should raise such a hue and cry about the German use of gas showed how very unsportsmanlike they were. Anyhow, it was ridiculous for a nation which had committed "*Rassenverrat*" by dragging in the savage colored races of many climes, and which, moreover, in spite of the inhibitive clauses of the Hague Convention used "dum-dum" bullets, to try and pretend that the enemy was so much more wicked than itself.

"How about the '*Spitz*' bullets?" Guido asked, coolly. "They are quite as murderous to human tissue as the 'dum-dum' bullets. They were the forerunners of the 'dum-dum' bullets and they are a German invention."

Wesendonck scowled.

"Germany is not using '*Spitz*' bullets in this war," he said stiffly.

As for the *Lusitania*, Americans had been warned to keep off the vessel, as everybody knew. As not everybody knew, Count von Bernstorff, kindly soul, not content with warning Americans through advertisement in the leading dailies, had taken the further precaution to send a telegram to every American who had engaged a passage on the *Lusitania*. What more could Germany do? What more? The Americans who had lost their lives on the *Lusitania* were entirely to blame for their own death. But no American, of course, would admit that. Americans were so very unreasonable."

Guido laughed, savagely.

"I think, Herr Wesendonck," he said, "that I have heard you express admiration for Abraham Lincoln."

"Ah!" cried Wesendonck, "a great American. If *he* were alive to-day!"

"This is what he would reply to your argument that the Americans who died on the *Lusitania* were to blame for their own death because they were warned," said Guido, speaking very quickly. "I quote Lincoln's exact words, so far as I remember them, which were uttered during a presidential campaign: 'You will not abide the election of a Republican president. In that event, you say, you will destroy the Union and then, you say, the great crime of having destroyed it will be upon us. That is cool. A highwayman holds a pistol to my ear and mutters through

his teeth, "Stand and deliver, or I shall kill you, and then you will be a murderer."'"

Wesendonck turned scarlet. He made a queer sound and tried in vain, quite evidently, to find some argument with which to reply; but for once his powers of sophistry had deserted him.

Grossvater Geddes rose and raised a trembling hand.

"Herr Wesendonck," he said, "I am an old man and although I am an American citizen I have preserved the faith in my own race which I brought over the sea with me in '48. In spite of all the tragic and immoral happenings of the last half-year I still cherish that faith. I cannot, I will not believe that the German people are in favor of the inhumane doings with which the German Army and Navy seek to advance the German cause. I prefer to believe, until I am convinced to the contrary by proof positive that, themselves an oppressed people, they have been driven into this war. But you, and others like you, who advance preposterous excuses for the conglomerate German cruelty which we are witnessing, have succeeded in tarnishing my faith in the German people, and some day, I fear, you will shatter it."

Having voiced his protest, the old man walked silently from the room.

Wesendonck's discomfiture was complete. He was by no means destitute of kindness and courtesy, and the apologies which he made were as genuine as they were profuse. How could he know, he said, that *der liebe alte Herr* was really so thoroughly in sympathy with England.

"I don't think he is," said Mrs. Geddes, rather fatuously, hoping to restore Wesendonck to serenity.

"But I do not understand," Wesendonck murmured. "I cannot understand. Herr Geddes is a German. The *Herr Professor* is a German-American. Is there no race feeling at all?"

"My father would not be suffering as he is if race feeling were extinct in him, as fortunately, it is in me," Professor Geddes replied, smiling amiably. "But what you Germans will not and cannot comprehend, Herr Wesendonck, is that American citizens, whether native-born or adoptive citizens, are bound together by spiritual ideals. And those ideals, my dear sir, are not compatible with the

career of violence and cruelty upon which the Germans have embarked."

Wesendonck's arguments to justify the sinking of the *Lusitania* were by no means the most outrageous that Guido heard. Dr. Erdman, who, as we know, disapproved of the sinking of hospital ships, and his brother Eddie, the man-milliner, gravely assured Guido that he was in the wrong in blaming Germany for the *Lusitania* tragedy. The big liner, they said, would never have gone down so quickly, if her entire hold had not been crammed with ammunition. The torpedo, penetrating to the ammunition chamber, had wrought quicker and more savage havoc than would have been possible if the cargo had consisted of non-contraband. Therefore it was quite plain that it was not Germany, but England and America, which were to blame.

"But," stammered Guido, who was surprised almost into speechlessness, "the Germans claim they knew ammunition was aboard, and that is their excuse for torpedoing her."

"Of course," the Doctor assented, "of course, Germany knew that ammunition was aboard. But England and America knew it also and denied it. And the passengers were warned. So I really think, my dear fellow, that Germany was technically correct in doing what she did. America is recognizing England's blockade. Then why not Germany's? Is it worse to kill outright, as Germany is doing, than to starve slowly, as England is trying to starve Germany? Why did we fight Spain? Because she was trying to starve the Cubans into submission. England is doing the same thing to-day. She is trying to starve Germany. Needless to say I deplore the loss of life as much as you do. But that must not blind us to the justice of things, and to the rights of belligerents in honorable warfare."

"But Germany is not starving," said Guido. "It is not food so much as raw material, especially raw material needed for the manufacture of ammunition, that England is withholding from Germany."

"Well," said Dr. Erdman, "a blockade is a blockade. And if we recognize one we ought to recognize the other. Truth and justice, my dear boy, truth and justice!"

Truth and justice! Rights of belligerents! Shades of Washington and Lafayette! If this was truth and justice

and honorable warfare, what was honorable warfare, anyhow?

Several years elapsed before the truth of the matter became generally known. One or more bombs, placed in the cargo of the vessel by paid German dynamiters, and timed to explode as she neared the English coast, were prematurely exploded when the torpedo struck the vessel and incidentally themselves.

Frau Ursula had taken the sinking of the *Lusitania* so to heart that after a desperate effort to keep on her feet, prolonged throughout two days, she took to her bed. A diligent search of the human heart will reveal that almost everyone entertains a clandestine fear of some one form of death. Frau Ursula thought death by drowning the most cruel form of death imaginable, and the *Titanic* disaster had cast a lasting shadow upon her life. But what was the loss of the *Titanic*, tragic and dreadful as it had been, to the wanton destruction of a thousand lives by modern pirates who boasted with a shameless, sickening egoism that science had made them invincible? For a week after the *Lusitania* tragedy Frau Ursula could not sleep without opiates of some sort, and Dr. Erdman, who had taken over Dr. Koenig's practice, for the old physician had withdrawn from active life, prescribed a week in bed to restore her jangled nerves to normal condition.

Guido, coming home one afternoon from college, went directly to his mother's room. She had been improving nicely for several days, and he was not surprised to see her sitting up. She wore a negligee of Alice blue albatross which became her very well. A glance at her face sufficed to tell Guido that she was greatly agitated about something, pleasurable, or non-pleasurable, he could not tell which.

"Mother, what's happened?" he demanded.

"I've quarreled with Dr. Erdman," she said.

"Mother!"

"Well—about the *Lusitania*, Guido!" Frau Ursula's lips were working violently, but she did not speak. She pointed to the wall, and turning, Guido saw that she was indicating two flags, their staffs crossed, which hung upon the wall. The one flag was the *Star-Spangled Banner*, the other was the German emblem. For years Frau Ursula had sedu-

lously treasured these flags. They had been given to her by a friend of her husband's who had attended one of the innumerable banquets given to Prince Henry during his visit to this country. The table, at this particular banquet, had been decorated with these little flags, two for each cover, which the guests had retained as souvenirs.

"Take down that German flag," Frau Ursula commanded, "and give it to me." Guido obeyed. She tore the flag from her staff and then handed it to Guido.

"Burn it," she said, laconically. "Burn it. I never want to see the odious thing, or any of its kind, again. Excepting—" she added, "as trophies of war brought home by our men. For surely, surely, we will declare war now."

"I think not," said Guido. "Americans are still strangely apathetic. They do not realize the danger of Germany triumphant. There will probably come a moment when the country will rise as one man and demand war. But that time has not yet come."

"Guido, there is another thing," Frau Ursula seemed highly embarrassed. "I think I am going to let Frau Gottschalk go."

"Why?" Guido inquired, giving no sign of emotion.

"Well, for one thing, I think she is pro-German although she vows she isn't. And there are other reasons."

Guido did not inquire what these other reasons were. He went to the window and drummed carelessly against the window pane.

Since the momentous night spent under Dr. Koenig's roof, he had dexterously contrived not to be left alone with Erna. Afternoons, instead of coming right home from college, he did his studying either in the College Library, or at Stan's or Otto's. If his mother was out of an evening, he was out also.

His avoidance of Erna was so pointed, and the contemptuous tranquillity with which he regarded her upon the rare occasions when she contrived to be alone with him was so patent that expediency counseled her to be prudent, lest she lose him forever. She did not yet comprehend that he had definitely escaped from her grasp. She had an abiding faith in the unvanquishable sensuality of the race, more particularly of the sex, and sooner or later, she told herself, he would be back at her feet. She blamed her-

self for the present state of affairs, believing that she had wooed him too persistently instead of allowing him to do the wooing.

That was the construction which she, being a courtesan both by habit and by nature, put upon the shining armor of inaccessibility in which the boy had sheathed himself. Moments he had of stress, of torment, of desire, of abject physical misery. But the real sting had gone out of his suffering, and temptation lay slain.

The passionate ardor of the convert, the religious fervor of the man who, having discovered his own soul, believes he has discovered something new when in truth he has discovered something imperishably old, still wrapped him around and effectively insulated him from any advances which the lady from time to time succeeded in delicately making.

The sight of her had become hateful to him, as a reminder of folly must always be an object of detestation. But, in his present religious exaltation he saw in her continued presence in his home, and in the confidence and affection with which his mother treated her, his much-merited punishment. She, who had been the instrument of his temptation, was also the instrument of his expiation.

His mother clamored for a reply.

Common justice, the feeling that expiation was not yet completed, and the unwritten code in such matters, impelled him to answer:

"Don't you think that's being a bit unfair to her, mother? She's been of very great use to you, you know. She's done a lot of things for you that—to put the thing bluntly—money does not pay for."

"I might give her a handsome gift of money," suggested Frau Ursula.

"Yes, you might do that, of course," said Guido, uneasily. "Still, it does not seem quite fair."

"I'm surprised to see you taking this stand." His mother fairly pounced on him. "I thought you and she weren't good friends any more. Well? What's happened?"

"In what way? How so?" Guido parried, adroitly.

"You never go out with her any more."

"Well, to be frank," Guido had the grace to blush, for he knew that he was being anything but frank, "the fact

is, Mother, I've been neglecting my own friends shamefully through going about so much with her."

Frau Ursula appeared to be entirely satisfied with this explanation. She seemed more than satisfied. She seemed pleased. Her hostility to Erna Gottschalk seemed to vanish like a flash of lightning. She acquiesced—seemingly—in Guido's decision. It would be decidedly unfair to dismiss the poor girl. She certainly had been a "pearl." And Guido was her own dear, sweet, broad-minded, noble boy to correct his crabbed old mother's selfishly narrow notions.

All of which gave Guido to think. He sensed that there was something behind Frau Ursula's behavior which, at the moment, eluded his analysis.

The only fires in the house were the fire in the kitchen range and the fire in the furnace in the cellar. Accordingly Guido descended to the kitchen to burn the German emblem. He had entered the kitchen before he noticed that Erna was at the range, explaining it to the new maid. Unperceived by either of the two women, he left the kitchen with the flag still in his hand. He possessed the rare virtue of not being ashamed to run away from temptation.

The bell rang and he went to the door to answer it. He thrust the flag in his pocket, meaning to dispose of it later. He opened the door and admitted Mrs. Erdman, who looked somewhat concerned.

"Is your mother worse, dear?" she asked, inclining her cheek to meet his kiss. "The Doctor telephoned me to come right here, without giving a reason. What has happened?"

"Oh, Mother's all right," said Guido. "But she and your German 'barbarian' have quarreled."

"Ah, you must not call my Frank that, not even in fun."

"Forgive me."

"About what did they quarrel?"

"The 'Lusitania.'"

Mrs. Erdman became very grave.

"I almost quarreled with him myself about that last night," she said. "I was quite angry. He did not lose his temper, but kept trumping up argument after argument until I was wild with indignation."

"And——"

"Well, I wouldn't make up. Then he said he had a night call and went out at eleven and never came home until breakfast. But he had slept. At a hotel."

"And then you made up?"

"Of course."

"How?"

"Now you are impertinent, sir." But in spite of her rebuke she was laughing. "Do you know, Guy, it was awfully nice of him to 'phone me about coming here, wasn't it? He wanted me to come before I knew of the quarrel, so that I would not be placed in the awkward position of having to remain away out of loyalty for him. Now wasn't that dear of him?"

"Adorable," said Guido, using the feminine adjective with purposive mischievousness. Mrs. Erdman gave him a withering look.

"I believe," said Guido, "you are still in love with your husband."

"Quite foolishly so," said Mrs. Erdman coolly. "Only," she added wistfully, "I wish he would come around in the little matter of the War."

Both became grave. There was no need for Dr. Erdman's wife to sing Dr. Erdman's praises. The entire town rang of his kindness, and his generosity, and his general fineness of character. His attitude on the War was incomprehensible to those who recognized the intrinsic unmorality of Germany. But the fact that his attitude was incredible made the incredibility of the entire German nation credible. This Guido had told himself over and over. It sounded like a paradox but it was the solemn truth. If people like Dr. Erdman, and the Baumgartens, and the Foerstes and dozens of others who were good and kind and honest in every relation of life, were taking this preposterous stand, confounding truth with soulless logic, and sophistry with argument, it became conceivable that the German people were back of their government after all, contrary to the amiable belief held by Grossvater Geddes in common with the American President.

Mrs. Erdman went to Frau Ursula's room, and Guido ran off to pay a brief call on Janet, whom he had not seen since the Sunday evening on which Wesendonck had distinguished himself. He wanted to talk Wesendonck

over with Janet. These two derived the utmost satisfaction in comparing impressions, especially war impressions.

But they did not exchange impressions on the War that day. The door was opened immediately in answer to Guido's summons, and to his surprise he saw the entire family assembled in the hall. Janet was crying, and so was Mrs. Geddes. From the Professor's hand fluttered an open letter. The envelope had dropped to the floor, and Guido recognized the Canadian postage stamp.

"Cecil?" Guido demanded, with a sickening contraction of the heart.

The Professor nodded.

"Is he——" Guido demanded again, and again the Professor nodded.

Cecil had been gassed. Gas was still so new a weapon that the English and Canadian troops were not fully equipped with gas masks, and Cecil, with hundreds of his comrades, had succumbed—had died slowly, writhing out his life in agony unutterable.

Cecil dead! Guido could not fathom it. He reeled home dazed and sick. Cecil dead! He had thought often of his English friend, picturing him in jeopardy, and he had lain awake nights, thinking of Cecil, and trying to visualize the hardships and discomforts of life in the trenches, the horror of a man's first over-the-top experience, the greater horror of seeing the bodies of the fallen—some dead and some wounded—lying about in all sorts of fantastically twisted and gruesome positions. He had needed to try hard to realize the discomfort and the grotesque horror. But somehow he had always thought more of the wet, and the uncleanness, and the vermin, and the unpalatable food, and the lack of bathing facilities, than he had thought of the danger.

He had never distinctly realized that Cecil might actually be killed.

And now Cecil was dead, Cecil with his fine brain, his splendid sense of justice and fair play, had been snuffed out as a candle may be snuffed out by the withdrawal of oxygen.

Cecil dead! Cecil a victim of this new horror that the Huns had unloosed upon the world. It was the first time that Guido had applied the opprobrious term to the Ger-

mans. He had never before been able to bring himself to use it. Some obscure emotion, which he had not been able accurately to dissect, had kept the word from his lips. Now, goaded into an anger rendered doubly terrible by the sense of his impotence, he used the word with conscious deliberation, with an energy which was the tangible token of the deadly corrosiveness of the rage which was sweeping through him.

"Huns," he said again, pronouncing the word as if it were a lash which he was wielding. "Huns, boches, Huns."

He remembered one of Wesendonck's dissertations.

"Only the English," he had said, "insult their enemies. No other nation deigns to invent contumelious names for its foes. Witness the English lies about the so-called Belgian atrocities. Witness the word 'Hun' now applied to the Germans." And he "explained" that the word "Hun" had been applied by the English to the French during the Napoleonic wars, and he ascribed the original use of the word in its odious significance to Thackeray. Guido had called his attention to the well-known fact that the Kaiser, in one of his innumerable tactless speeches, had charged his troops, when at war, to emulate the Huns, to show neither clemency nor mercy, thus to transform themselves into the scourges of God. Then Wesendonck had become angry, and had demanded to be told the occasion on which the Kaiser was "alleged" to have uttered such ridiculous sentiments. Guido had not been able to supply the exact date, whereupon Wesendonck had assured Guido, none too politely, that he was "as usual, misinformed." His explanation of the origin of the term, he insisted, was the correct one. But when Guido asked for chapter and verse, Wesendonck had flustered and blustered and told him that that had nothing to do with the matter, for, as everybody knew who knew anything at all, the term had originated with Thackeray.

And, remembering all this, Guido, with increased fervor, said:

"Huns, boches, Huns."

He heard Otto's whistle behind him. His first impulse was to ignore the signal and proceed on his way. He was

only a few doors from home. He walked another step or two. Then he turned and waited for Otto.

"Cecil's dead," he said, when Otto reached him.

"Oh, I am sorry, I am truly sorry," Otto cried.

"You'll be more sorry when you hear how he died," said Guido, with scathing scorn. "They gassed him. Murderous fiends!"

The blood rushed to Otto's head, but he said nothing. After a pause, he said:

"Cecil was such a fine chap. It's dreadful to think of him as dead."

"They gassed him," Guido repeated. And then, as Otto did not reply, he demanded:

"Did you hear what I said?"

"Yes," Otto said, very quietly. "I heard. War is what Sherman said it was. It ought never, never to be allowed."

"Why, then, did the Germans start this war?" Guido cried. "If honorable war is what Sherman said it was, then language is inadequate to describe war when waged by an enemy as dishonorable and dastardly as the Germans."

Otto bit his lip. He said nothing, and Guido's wrath grew in inverse ratio to his friend's self-control. He wanted to hurt Otto, to make him squirm, to drag from him a murmur of dissent and of anger. Strange perversions of which the human heart is capable. Guido had loved Cecil well, but, when the last was said, Otto, errant though he was, was dearer to Guido than all his other friends combined, was dear to him with the singular closeness which inheres in friendships formed at a tender age.

And yet here he was, trying in every possible way to pick a quarrel with Otto. Anger is blind. But it was not so blind as to prevent Guido from perceiving the pettiness of what he was doing. He perceived it. And yet he persevered in his endeavor to make Otto angry.

He had thrust his hand into his coat pocket, and his fingers encountered the silken touch of the German flag which his mother had asked him to burn. He pulled it forth and shook it in Otto's face.

"I was to burn this," he said, "but clean fire is too good for so dishonest a rag." With that he threw the oblong

silk upon the pavement and scraped his feet over it until it was soiled and torn.

"So," he said, "so."

Otto's face had turned blood-red. His neck seemed to swell and expand. For one moment the thought occurred to Guido that Otto might kill him, so terrible was the anger mirrored in his friend's eyes. And those herculean hands could have choked Guido to death in less time than it takes to tell. The thrill of anticipation which trembled through Guido was, strange to tell, pleasurable.

Suddenly Otto went dead-white. He said, with enormous gentleness:

"I think, Guido, the shock of Cecil's death has left you unwell. You are at your own door. So I will leave you."

Guido watched the retreating figure of his friend with mingled emotions. Suddenly it occurred to him that death might come as swiftly to Otto as it had come to Cecil. A burning house, an automobile running wild, a collision of street cars—there were a hundred and one ways in which a man, living in a civilized community, might be done to death as expeditiously as Cecil had been done to death on the battlefield.

"Otto," he shouted, "Otto!" And he ran wildly down the street after his friend.

He had to call thrice before Otto heard him and turned.

He was panting heavily when he reached Otto who had walked back to meet him.

"Otto," he said, "I've been a beast. Forgive me."

"Never mind, Guido. You're fearfully upset. It's no wonder. When a fellow loses his best friend——"

"Not my *best* friend, Otto——"

Otto understood. He put out his big, brawny, hairy paw and clasped Guido's slender white hand in a clutch that made Guido wince.

"Try not to grieve too much," he said. "Try. He met death honorably, like the brave fellow he was. Somehow, Guido, a fellow cannot help feeling that that is the finest way to die—in battle."

Guido let himself in with his key very quietly. He wanted to slink away to his own room and lock the door and cry to his heart's content. Most particularly he did not wish to see his mother. He did not intend to tell her

of Cecil's death until she had entirely recovered. Erna he had entirely forgotten.

But his mother had changed into a rose-colored silk tea-gown, in which she looked particularly handsome, and was awaiting him in the parlor. She called to him. He made an effort to check the emotion which was making the chords of his throat rigid, and walked into the room with a smile—a somewhat vacant and foolish smile—on his lips.

Frau Ursula had nothing particular to say to him and he was free to go to his room almost immediately. He locked the door as he had planned, but now the tears that previously had clouded his eyes and the sobs that had torn at his throat would not come.

He threw himself into a morris chair. He felt flaccid and limp. Also he felt horribly ashamed. He had behaved disgustingly. No other friend but Otto would have forgiven such behavior so quickly, so kindly. Then the small, gentle face of Cecil with its features of girlish refinement rose before his mental eye, and his shame increased. How Cecil would have hated to witness such a scene as he had made. He had degraded not only himself but the memory of the friend for whom he was grieving when he had behaved so outrageously.

He reddened. He was alone in the privacy of his room, but he reddened as if all the world had been there to see. He felt too ashamed for words. He felt that he had debased himself to a quite unbelievable degree.

"It's my German blood," he thought, bitterly. "It's the streak of German in me." And then he perceived the utter unfairness and narrow-mindedness of the charge. Otto, who was German racially and pro-German politically, had displayed an admirable self-restraint and forbearance in spite of the indecent verbal assaults leveled against him.

And Cecil was dead. What a way to mourn for a friend! Guido, in retrospection, touched the lowest rung of the ladder of self-loathing and self-abasement.

Another thought occurred to him. Barely a fortnight had elapsed since his regeneration. And Cecil had died—when? Possibly at the very time that he, Guido, who was living the soft, secure life of ease and plenty, was submitting to the caresses of a courtesan. The thought maddened him. He strove to recall the date of Cecil's death as stated

in the Canadian letter. He referred to his calendar and found to his unutterable relief that the date of Cecil's death coincided with the date of the night which he had spent at Dr. Koenig's.

Was there, then, something more in telepathy than anyone dreamed of? Had he—subconsciously—felt that his friend was dying, and had the subconscious emotion objectified itself in his spiritual regeneration?

Was this the reason why some pure souls had to die young, life barely tasted, to save souls less innocent and weaker than themselves from sin?

If that was so then the Crucifixion of Christ had yet another significance!

The thought fascinated him. He strode through the room with mighty strides. And suddenly, when his mood had reached the zenith of its exaltation, there flashed upon him the recollection of his behavior to Otto and again he writhed in shame and disgust.

"I," he said, "I, Guido von Estritz, who can evolve such splendid and fine thoughts, who can conquer myself where big issues of morality are concerned, am the same Guido von Estritz who did that disgusting thing!"

Shame overcame him anew. He thought he would never live down the recollection of his conduct that afternoon. He had throughout, in arguing about the War, tried honestly to concede that the German sympathizers were, at least, entitled to a hearing. That they loved their national emblem was as natural as that Americans loved Old Glory. And there *were* good Germans, lots of them, no matter what anyone enraged beyond the bounds of reason by the unspeakable deeds of the German Army might contend to the contrary. And all these honest people, every innocent German man, woman and child, all the great Germans whom he loved and revered—Schiller, Lessing, Goethe, Beethoven, Wagner—all this vast host of good and kindly and noble souls he had spurned and insulted when he had defiled the German flag.

He hated himself. He hated himself with a bitterness which he had never felt toward any living being before.

"It's the dreadful mixture in me," he said, "the dreadful international hodge-podge. I acted like a mongrel. Like a miserable street cur. That's how I acted."

After a little while he said:

"I must be patient with myself. I am not really bad. I must learn to be patient when this queer, mad fellow to whom I am bound goes on a rampage."

A great peace descended upon him. And now he was able to abandon himself to thoughts of Cecil unhindered and unobscured by self-contemplation and self-abasement.

Suddenly he rose and found his copy of the Book of Common Prayer. He turned to the Service of the Dead, and this he read through, slowly, from beginning to end. It was the only thing he could think of doing in the way of paying the friend who slumbered on French soil, the proper obsequies.

CHAPTER III

FOR the first time since her indisposition, Frau Ursula came to the table that evening. The new maid, who had never waited on the table before and therefore had to be taught, had been a providential factor in destroying the solitude which would otherwise have placed Guido at the mercy of Erna's machinations. Nevertheless he was devoutly thankful to see his mother back in her accustomed place at the head of the table.

He was silent and ate little, but his preoccupation with Cecil's death did not blind him to the curious excitement which swayed Frau Ursula. He had been at loss, in the afternoon, to explain this excitement. His mother's quarrel with Dr. Erdman did not entirely account for it. Frau Ursula was now in a very amiable, talkative frame of mind, and she was excessively affable to Erna, a circumstance which Guido noted with some perplexity. His mother had intended discharging her *Stuetze* that very afternoon without adequate reason, so far as Guido could gather, and apparently had been restrained from doing so only by his intervention. Frau Ursula was not a capricious woman. She was impulsive at times, but her impulsiveness was the natural outcome of a thoroughly good woman's admirable and dependable scheme of living and of life.

Guido, thus, was frankly puzzled, and his perplexity for the moment pushed his grief for Cecil into the background. In consequence he did not exercise the conscious control over his emotions which he had practiced earlier in the evening. Thus he exposed himself to a renewed attack of his grief—for grief, while in virgin bloom, like every other emotion, will not be gainsaid or denied.

Suddenly, while they were discussing an indifferent subject, he remembered Cecil. Immediately he lost the thread of the conversation, and, with disconcerting abruptness, stopped talking.

Grief, having stabbed him in the back, left him powerless to defend himself. The tears which he had choked back in the afternoon rose spontaneously now. His mother questioned him so that, after all, he was forced to tell her about Cecil.

Frau Ursula was greatly shocked and withdrew to her room immediately after supper. Erna was in the kitchen superintending the maid. Guido was reading, but gave the printed page only a half-hearted attention, and presently he withdrew even that moiety of interest from the book and sat staring before him with unseeing eyes. He had forgotten the very existence of Erna Gottschalk. He was thinking about and wondering, as we are all prone to do when the sense of personal bereavement has sharpened and pointed our spiritual faculties and yearnings, just what is the nature of the Great Beyond. . . .

Erna came into the room at this moment. From the gloom that lay athwart his face it was easy enough for her to read what was passing in his soul. She went and stood beside him.

"Poor boy," she said, "poor boy, you are suffering. Would that I could suffer for you." And she stroked his hair and gently laid her fingers against his brow.

In later years, he was always horribly ashamed of what had happened next, almost as much ashamed as of the blatant display which he had made of himself in the street earlier in the day. The two occurrences, taken together, stamped him as a hopeless vulgarian. So, for years, in foolish exaggeration, he thought in vain repining of spirit.

This is what happened.

He pushed back his chair from the table, almost upsetting the lady in his haste to withdraw himself from her embrace. Then, almost viciously, he exclaimed:

"Woman, have you no heart at all? No decency? Leave me alone, won't you? Do you not yet realize that I don't want anything to do with you?"

Erna shrank back, blank amazement, mingled with fright, showing in her face. Guido turned to stalk magnificently from the room and stood frozen to the spot. Frau Ursula was standing on the threshold.

She smiled quite pleasantly, but there was an ominous glitter in her eyes.

"It seems, *liebe Erna*," she said, "that you and I must have a little heart to heart talk. Will you come to my room, if you please."

Erna Gottschalk laughed defiantly.

"It's not necessary," she said. "I've had enough of this household. You people make me sick with your smug respectability. That *Muttersoehnchen* of yours! Pahl! I snap my fingers at such a *Waschlappen*."

"Now you know what I think of you," she said, turning to Guido, and, lest there be any mistake, she repeated her opinion of him. He was a "wash-rag," a "mother's pet," he was tied to his mother's apron-strings. He was a jelly-fish, a canting hypocrite and a simpleton. Odd words for a voice that held in its compass the beauty and the sonorousness of church-bells to pronounce. Odd sentiments for a madonna-visaged woman to entertain.

She walked from the room, head held very erect, drawing back her skirts as she brushed past Frau Ursula, as if contamination one way or the other lurked in haphazard contact of garments.

Left alone with Guido, Frau Ursula, shaken with sudden anger, said:

"*Solch' infame Person.*"

The "infamous person," hearing this, came back.

"I'll thank you not to call me names to my face," she said, with a sort of royal magnificence. "What you and your ilk say behind my back doesn't bother me in the least. I'm leaving your house as soon as I can get my things packed. I'll send the expressman for them tomorrow."

"Very well," said Frau Ursula, "I will have your check ready for you."

"For how long a time?"

"For the full month, of course."

"Three months would hardly indemnify me for what I've put up with in this house," Erna said.

"Very well," said Frau Ursula, "I will pay you three months' salary."

"In addition to the current month?"

"In addition to the current month."

"Send it to my room. Good-bye," said Guido's erst-

while temptress, and blew him a kiss. "You are a pretty boy," she said, "but you are a fool."

It was the last thing she said to him. A hateful scene, he reflected with something like regret, to place a period to his first love-affair. And, such is the weakness and the volatility of the human heart—for five minutes he experienced a violent nostalgia for the moments of bliss which he owed her.

She packed her things in an incredibly short time. Barely half an hour elapsed before the front door closed upon her.

Frau Ursula had sat in silence until Erna was out of the house. She went to the parlor window to convince herself that her *Stuetze* was really gone.

"So," she said, when she came back into the dining-room. She closed the door behind her. Guido's heart sank. For the first time in his life he was afraid to face his mother.

"Whatever harm's done is done," said Frau Ursula. "I demand no confession. I ask no questions. I make no statement. One thing only I am going to say—you had a very narrow escape."

Guido breathed more freely.

"Mother," he said, with great earnestness, "the real danger was over a fortnight ago. The night I remained away from home—I never told you—I was at Dr. Koenig's all night. I had to have it out with myself. I don't pretend that I am wholly innocent——"

His voice broke. He could not think of anything else to say. It did not occur to him that his words were open to misconstruction.

Fully a minute elapsed before Frau Ursula spoke.

"Well," she said, "I suppose it had to come. I hoped—I suppose every mother hopes—that my boy was going to be different from other men. But Nature, I dare say, will not be thwarted."

More from her manner than from her words Guido realized, with a scorching sense of the monumental injustice of the thing, that his mother believed him deeply committed to the scarlet sin. He was so overcome with the shock of this realization that, for the longest time, he could find neither words nor voice in which to protest.

His mother regarded him fixedly as if he had suddenly

become a stranger. She looked him over carefully, his face, eyes, hair, hands, the very fit of his clothes were scrutinized by her appraisingly. And he stood silent and sullen, hot and angry, and woefully, impotently silent under her gaze.

"Yes," she said at last, "you are a very good-looking boy. No wonder the women are mad about you. And rich. Oh, how I wish you had been a girl."

It was the most cruel thing she had ever said to him. The most cruel thing she could possibly have said. It was an indictment of his personality, a denial of his right to be himself, a pronouncement that his very existence was futile and vain.

The hot, angry tears of mortification stood in the young man's eyes.

And suddenly he recovered his voice and his power of speech.

"Mother, it's not as bad as you think. My word of honor——"

"Supposing we leave your 'honor' out of this, Guido."

"But, Mother, I am telling you the truth."

"I am not aware that you have told me anything. You don't call a statement negating my thoughts telling me something, do you?"

"Mother, if you will allow me to say something——"

"I beg your pardon," she rejoined, frostily polite.

Humiliation overcame him. He threw himself into a chair, and, in spite of his shame in his lack of self-control, he abandoned himself to his tears. Slowly, sporadically, angrily, they trickled down his cheeks.

"Guido, *mein Herzensjunge*, do not take it so to heart. She was a bad, wicked woman and you were a mere child. The shame of it—the shame of it."

He stayed his tears to indulge in furious denial.

"It's not as bad as you think," he shouted. "I'm telling you the truth." And he particularized his denial, as best he might, choosing his words stumblingly, blunderingly. He had never spoken less eloquently, yet he hoped that he was convincing his mother of his innocence. But though she soothed him, and stroked his hair, and called him her dear, dear boy, he could see by the wounded look in her

eyes that she still believed him guilty of the sin which he had striven so desperately to avoid.

"I do not know what I can say to persuade you that I am telling you the truth," he said, finally. "I've never told you a lie. And I never shall. And I repeat once more—I am innocent. If you want to know what saved me—well, it was——" he stopped short, a new, shy embarrassment in his manner. "Christ saved me," he said.

This avowal was made so abruptly that Frau Ursula did not at once grasp its full import. She stared at him in mute amazement. When, finally, the significance of his revelation dawned upon her, she exclaimed, joyously:

"And are you going to join my church? Are you going to be a Lutheran?"

"No," he said, "I'm not going to join any church. At least not for the present. Perhaps never. One does not have to be a sectarian to believe in Christ."

"But you do believe—in Christ?"

"With all my heart," he replied, and wondered whether he had been guilty of an untruth or an insincerity in saying that, since his mother would probably attach a significance to the phrase which it was not his intention to convey.

"Ah!" Frau Ursula exclaimed, her face radiant with joy, "then you *are* telling me the truth."

She produced a note in Hauser's hand and flourished it before Guido's eyes.

"From your father," she said, forgetting in her perturbation that Hauser's role as Guido's father had long since become obsolete.

"It was very decent of him," she said. "He has no reason to love you." And she was so overcome by the recollection of Hauser's generosity that she fell to re-reading the letter, the nature of which Guido had yet to learn, and which, truth to tell, she had read so often before that she could have repeated it verbatim without making a single mistake.

The phrase, "he has no reason to love you," made Guido smart anew. Ordinarily no hurt would have accrued to it, but, juxtaposed to Frau Ursula's earlier phrase, "How I wish you had been a girl," the latter phrase assumed the bitter significance of a recrimination. With overwhelming

poignancy Guido became aware suddenly that, after all, Frau Ursula was not his mother, that he was not her child. She would have preferred a daughter to a son, and as he was not her own flesh and blood she might have chosen the sex of the adopted child upon which she had lavished such a world of sacrificing mother-love. Why, then, had she not chosen a girl? Out of pity. And what return had that adopted son, that foundling for whom she had made a home in her heart, made her? He had brought about a rupture between herself and her husband whom, unaccountably, she still loved.

Guido's self-appraisal was conducted in a spirit of acrid bitterness. His life was a failure, a bleak, dismal failure. What had he done so far? Destroyed his mother's happiness, ruined his step-father's life, kissed a courtesan and outraged the decencies in his behavior toward his best friend.

Frau Ursula, having concluded her hundredth perusal of Hauser's letter, laid it upon the table. She was dissolved in tears.

The story which the letter told was an unsavory one, and now that she was convinced of Guido's fundamental innocence, she told it to him in briefest outline. The Gottschalks were professional blackmailers. The woman's part of the game was to entice young men who had wealthy parents to some lair where she allowed her husband to discover her with her lover. One of the unfortunate fathers who had doled out a small fortune in blackmail to these two harpies was a friend of Hauser, and, in a moment of profound disgust, had taken Hauser into his confidence. Hauser had made inquiries, and by putting two and two together had arrived at the conclusion that the woman whom his wife was harboring was the identical adventuress. He had written his wife at once.

Frau Ursula, having finished her much expurgated tale, relapsed into silence. She was not unhappy, as Guido could see. Indeed, she seemed to be holding an imaginary interview with someone from which she derived considerable comfort and entertainment, for her facial expression underwent the rapid changes characteristic of a person engaged in an animated conversation.

Guido watched her with lively interest. It was easy to

see she had entirely forgotten his presence. He leaned over and touched her hand.

"Mother," he said, gently, "you love him still, and it was awfully decent of him to write you, for, as you say, he has no reason to love me. He showed rare magnanimity. God knows I've regretted my conduct bitterly. Bitterly. What can I do to undo the mischief for which I am responsible? Mother, he has given you a new token of his love in writing you—will you allow me to go and see him——"

Immediately Frau Ursula stiffened.

"You forget," she said, coldly.

"No, I do not forget," said Guido. "It was an unjust suspicion, of course. But, Mother, just now you suspected me of the same thing, and I bear you no ill-will for the injustice you did me. So there you are."

Frau Ursula stared at Guido in unfeigned amazement.

"Is it possible," she said at last, "is it possible that you do not perceive the difference? My dear boy——" and she explained to him the double standard of morality as it obtains throughout the entire world.

It was Guido's turn to be shocked. He remembered Dr. Koenig's conciliatory attitude on the evening which had marked a turning-point in his relations with Erna. The Doctor, it will be remembered, had uttered a lot of insincere views because he feared to alienate the boy's confidence by presenting an inflexible, harsh morality. Guido had wondered a little at the laxness of the old man's views. In part, at least, so far as they concerned the double standard, they had been genuine enough, although it is doubtful whether Dr. Koenig had ever availed himself of the leniency toward his own sex which he preached.

Guido was outraged. He was very young, and very enthusiastic and he was very thoroughly under the still, sweet influence of that recently discovered Something which he was not quite certain whether to call Soul, or Religion, or Christ. He had not discussed that experience with anyone. He could not have discussed it with anyone. It was too recent. Not even with Frau Ursula. Least of all, perhaps, with her.

For, like most men and women who captiously observe the manual of their own religious faith, Frau Ursula con-

founded religion with denominationalism, and was sustained by an irascible conviction that her brand of belief was the only one which could possibly attract the worshiper who was both sincere and intelligent. Guido was perfectly aware of this little peculiarity of his mother. He shrank with mimosa-like sensitiveness from the mere idea of telling her of his religious experience—both for her sake and for his own.

That experience must remain shrined in his holy of holies until—perchance at another's need—he would see fit to take it out of the casket where it reposed.

But, in the light of that experience, he was inexpressibly shocked, pained and outraged by all Frau Ursula said. She said many things, the sort of thing good women say and believe only too often about the eternal difference in the need of the two sexes, the fundamental difference in the function of the two sexes, the uncurbable passions of the one sex, and the serene, untroubled moral tenor of the concomitant sex.

Guido showed his respect for his mother in not believing that she believed all she said she believed. She inveighed monstrously against the unnamable sisterhood. She showed no mercy in her judgment of the sisterhood's poverty-whipped, circumstance-hounded members. But she exonerated completely the pleasure-loving, lascivious brotherhood. Man's physical necessity was the magic phrase which whitewashed man; woman's colder passions were the sign-manual of her damnation.

The phrase, "physical necessity" brought to Guido's mind that other phrase which one saw bandied to and fro continually in the papers now-a-days, "military necessity." The boy possessed an incisively logical mind which moved on the plane of the higher logic, and, scorning mere platitudes, delved deep into the hidden roots of things. If "military necessity" was not a tenable argument, as of course it was not, why should "physical necessity" be tenable? Or, if it was, why condone in man what is irrevocably condemned in woman? For he did not believe that all women were cold. He knew better. Erna—he dismissed her as an unworthy example—but good women, pure women, excellent women were not all as cold as his mother would have had him believe. For that matter, there was his mother her-

self. He had seen her, when under Hauser's spell, as vibrant and tense with emotion as any man might have been.

Ratiocination took a bold leap forward. It was ridiculous to believe that for one wrong thing done a man must be eternally damned. It was equally ridiculous to fancy that a woman should be so punished.

He recalled Dobronov's expression, "It is the universal temptation." Dobronov, it is true, had used the expression as applying to his own sex only. But Dobronov had probably been actuated in deleting the fair sex from the dissertation by that deep-rooted courtesy which was at the bottom of all his actions and thoughts.

Guido came to a sharp conclusion. Women were so ashamed of the universal temptation, so far as it applied to themselves, that sooner than admit its presence and its power, they, unconsciously, no doubt, and in good faith, preferred to picture the woman who had gone wrong as an unimaginably black monster, partitioned off from the rest of her sex by insurmountable, natural barriers, sooner than admit the existence of certain emotions in themselves.

He drew a further deduction from his conclusion.

There were good women, no doubt, who were quite as much disgusted with the orthodox view of their sisters in this matter as he was. It was conceivable that some women were rebels by nature, and that their rebelliousness took the form of a contemptuous fling at the entire business of marriage. Or, there might be other reasons, finer reasons—— He could not imagine what these finer reasons might be, but he felt sure that they existed.

Although his passions were swift and strong—as they were bound to be since his sensibilities were keen and his appreciation of beauty, wheresoever found, quite phenomenal—yet there was in him nothing of the sensualist, as has been remarked before, and therefore he was temperamentally incapable of getting the viewpoint of the average male, to whom female virtue is a material asset. And he had in him nothing of the smug Pharisee who, having narrowly escaped the scarlet pitfall, spends his days and nights thereafter in lashing and slashing at iniquity. His own narrow escape had made him humble, not proud, had

made him compassionate, not hard. So that he could not have reached any other conclusion than he did.

Frau Ursula would have rambled on interminably on the fruitful subject, but Guido presently caught her up sharply.

"There is just one thing I want to say in defense of your husband," he said. "*Mutterchen*, if I had been your own child you could not possibly have lavished a greater wealth of love upon me than you did. I believe that's unusual in women. Isn't it? Well, your husband saw the daily wonder of your love, and seeing it, it may have been hard for him to believe that I was the child of the widow of a passing acquaintance of yours. There's an element of grandeur in the love you gave a poor waif like myself which the ordinary mind, I imagine, cannot understand."

Guido was too kind to add that, if she had ever given utterance to the wish that he, Guido, had been a girl instead of a boy, in Hauser's hearing, Hauser's theory that he was not an adopted child, would have received further justification. Never had Frau Ursula said anything to Guido that rankled as that did.

Frau Ursula was greatly troubled. Her conscience was not quite easy because invariably, in speaking of Guido to Hauser, she had suppressed her true motive for the adoption. To hide her confusion she said, a little sharply:

"I really do not see why you are taking my husband's part against me."

"Do you call it taking his part when I accuse him of possessing an ordinary mind?"

"Ah, well, I am too tired to argue with you." And she went off to bed.

For fully a week after this episode Frau Ursula ran eagerly to the door when the postman rang the bell, instead of allowing the maid to bring in the letters. Guido guessed that she had written to thank Hauser for his good offices, and was hoping for another letter from him. But no letter came. At the end of a week's time the old inertia had settled upon her, and her eyes wore the wounded, troubled look which they had worn so long.

And as Dr. Erdman, who, of course, had been taken back into Frau Ursula's good graces, pronounced her entirely out of danger of a nervous collapse, she again plunged

into Red Cross work with the abandon and energy of a woman who has a vital hurt to hide.

After that a strange change came into the relationship which existed between Guido and his mother.

Until that evening when Erna was unmasked, he had thought his mother the most perfect of created beings. His long talk with her that evening had revealed her as being neither as infallible in judgment nor as broadly kind as he had thought her to be. Moreover, he considered that her attitude toward Hauser was strangely unforgiving and unreasonable. The insult Hauser had offered her did not seem as black as it had once seemed, and Guido thought that his mother should have swallowed her pride and approached Hauser with a reconciliation in mind.

Instead of the superwoman he had believed his mother to be he had discovered a flesh-and-blood woman with many minor imperfections which were making the road hard and rough for her, as minor imperfections of character have a habit of doing. And yet he loved her not one whit the less. Her narrow religious outlook, her differential sex-valuation of purity, her incredible obstinacy where Hauser was concerned, were after all only so many unbecoming veils through which the kernel of her true self, which was honest and loyal and true and—where she approved—kind, showed as clearly as if the disfiguring veils which shrouded her were sheerest spiritual gossamer.

Guido felt for her an increased tenderness. Formerly he had looked to her for advice and guidance. Now, suddenly, he felt that he was stronger, more reasonable and broader than she, and that it behooved him to gloss over her little peculiarities whenever they threatened to assume a sharp edge, to protect her, to humor her, to give her comfort and moral support.

This unobtrusive assumption of moral responsibility was the first-fruit of self-conquest.

There was a very subtle, a very delicate change in his manner of speaking with her after this. She was too engrossed in the renewal of her unhappiness to perceive it.

CHAPTER IV

YOUTH is the season of egoism, meaning by egoism not selfishness, which is always a pertinacious, cold-blooded sort of a business, but that healthy expansiveness of personality that leads to extreme absorption in self during the temporary process of adjustment to the complex environment that ensheathes human existence.

Guido had his modicum of youthful egoism, and it never occurred to him that he owed Dr. Koenig an elucidation of the concurrence of circumstances that had sent him, Guido, scurrying to the old man for a night's lodging upon a certain evening.

When, one day, the two met in the street by chance, the old man stopped the young.

"Well," he said, "when are you coming in for another quasi-religious talk?"

"I'm afraid what I have to say would not please you," Guido responded.

"You are going to turn Lutheran?"

"No," said Guido, smiling.

"Then what?"

Guido laughed outright.

"I have no desire at the moment to embrace any particular so-called religious faith," he said. "One thing became clear to me the night I spent at your house. The consciousness of right and wrong is more than mere relativity. It is an elemental, a fundamental, a spiritual fact."

"Does that mean that you believe that the soul is a separate entity?"

"My entire belief," said Guido, "is comprised in the statement I made just now."

"That belief, my dear boy, necessitated a legion of other beliefs. In admitting that a supernatural agency influences human life, you open the door to all the fanatic rigmarole with which unscrupulous priests have sought to keep humanity in mental bondage."

Guido thought a moment, and then made the amazing answer:

"You accuse me of believing that a supernatural agency influences human life. But, if I am not mistaken, you yourself believe, with Spencer, that Matter and Spirit are two faces of the same Unknowable Reality. In admitting the existence of Spirit, sir, you, too, are opening the door to all sorts of fantastic beliefs."

"That is nonsense, that is utter nonsense," shouted the Doctor swinging his cane about quite angrily. "The Unknowable Reality may be something quite different from either spirit or matter, if by spirit you mean soul. And even if there is a Spiritual Essence, a Divine Essence, I unequivocally deny that we miserable worms, whose entire knowledge is necessarily a relative knowledge, can know anything whatever of absolute morality. It is asinine to pretend that we can."

"What you believe is," said Guido, "that our sense of morality has been slowly built up through long centuries as a matter of pure expediency. Is that so?"

"Exactly. That belief is scientific and strictly in accordance with the theory of evolution."

"I do not see that the theory of evolution is in the least invalidated by the belief in the Indwelling Light. On the contrary, the theory of evolution and evolution itself are greatly furthered by it. In what other way can we explain the motive power of evolution, the interstitial force, the invisible energy which has helped man to rise from lowly beginnings in an ever swiftly ascending scale to his present splendid heights? Without a belief in the spiritual and moral forces of the Universe, I really do not see how you can account for the insistently upward current of evolution."

Dr. Koenig glared at the boy in silence. A prodigious emotion seemed to agitate him. Suddenly, without having spoken, he turned, ejaculated a few unintelligible words and made off rapidly, wildly and noisily chastising the sidewalk with his cane as he walked away.

The old man was incredibly stirred. He had, as we know, hoped with a hope which in his innermost heart he pronounced ridiculous, that this boy, who was so oddly fathered and mothered, would corroborate his own beliefs

by arriving at them without any active guidance. The views which had suddenly cropped out in Guido did not in the least coincide with the beliefs which Dr. Koenig had thought the boy would embrace. They were, indeed, staggeringly different.

Dr. Koenig was a Prussian by birth. There was a time when the Puritans of Europe lived in Prussia, odd as that may seem to us who have witnessed the happenings of the second decade of the Twentieth Century. Dr. Koenig was derived from this stock. He had been brought up on the Bible, and he loved the Scriptures, a circumstance not at all incompatible with his repudiation of the belief in the divinity of Christ and in an anthropomorphic deity.

Now, out of the welter of his mind, one sentence from the Bible sprang flamelike into acute consciousness:

"For I come not to destroy but to fulfill."

What if the meaning of that were to be reversed:

"For I come not to fulfill but to destroy."

What if fulfillment and destruction were complementary one of the other, were the concave and convex surfaces of the underlying reality mirrored or reflected by the contiguous spiritual experience of the race!

Was it possible that the world stood on the threshold of a new religious experience—that agnosticism and monism and Spencerism were to be consigned to the dust-heap of by-gone days along with the other worn-out heterodoxes and heresies?

Guido, having watched the Doctor walk off, turned to walk off in the opposite direction and unexpectedly found himself face to face with Yomanato.

"I took the liberty of waiting for you here," said the Japanese quietly.

"I had a rather spirited conversation just now," said Guido.

The Japanese said nothing.

"We were discussing religion," Guido continued, and again Yomanato remained silent. It did not occur to Guido that Japanese etiquette might forbid the young man to

ask a direct question. He knew Yomanato fairly well by this time and yet these inscrutable silences of his oppressed Guido as much as they had done on the first day of their acquaintance. He said, impetuously:

"I would give a good deal to know what is passing in that head of yours."

"If you really wish to know," the Japanese retorted, pleasantly, "I shall be glad to tell."

"I wish you would."

"I was wondering why white men get to quarreling so easily when the subject of religion comes up."

"Well," said Guido, laughing, "I suppose we do."

"I did not know what you were talking about," said Yomanato, "for I stood far enough away not to hear what you were saying, yet close enough to have jiu-jitsued the old gentleman if he had attempted to beat you with that stout cane of his."

Guido was so amused by this suggestion that he burst out laughing.

"It was awfully good of you, Yomanato," said Guido, "but old Dr. Koenig would not hurt a fly."

Guido was bound for Stan's house, where class matters were to be discussed that afternoon. Invitations had been issued promiscuously, but Yomanato, of course, had not been invited. Guido felt considerable embarrassment, but he did not dare to invite Yomanato to come in with him—a situation which created in Guido a feeling akin to remorse for his enforced insincerity.

"Well," Stan greeted him, "I thought you were going to bring that yellow gink in here with you."

"I wouldn't have done Yomanato the injustice to have asked him in," Guido responded, coolly.

"Done *him* the injustice—well, of all nerve," said Stan, laughing.

"Not at all," Guido retorted. "You would have had the decency, I suppose, not to throw him out, but you would have made him feel in some way or other that he wasn't wanted."

"Well, I should smile," said Dalton. "Just watch us. We would have friz him out. Yellow ain't a moral shade."

"Oh, close your trap," said Guido, resorting to slang for the sake of emphasis.

"I move we get down to business," said Otto. "I can't stay over half an hour."

"Great people the Japs," said Dalton. "I understand that they regard the serving of tea and the arranging of flowers as real arts. It is to laugh."

"Tubins and McGuire ain't here yet, so Al and Guy can go on bickering a little longer," said Stan.

"I don't want to bicker particularly," said Guido.

"Nor I," said Dalton. "I only began to bicker with Guy for the common good."

"How d'ye make that out?" Stan tipped back his chair and placed his feet against the mantle while he luxuriously inhaled the breath of a diabolical smelling pipe.

"Well, if I keep Guy busy defending Japan, he and Otto can't get all het up about the War."

The remark was an unfortunate one, for both Guido and Otto chose to construe it as being in the nature of a challenge. In less than a minute they were in the thick of the usual fray.

"You bonehead," Stan said to Dalton, "I've a great mind to lick you for this." Then, turning to the others, he said: "Look here, boys, you had better stop right off before either of you get any madder."

But the comparative degree of "mad" had long since been passed. Both Guido and Otto were far too angry by this time to be amenable to the well-meant intervention of a mutual friend. Otto, as usual, was telling the wildest yarns about England's turpitude. Finding that humane Americans of German extraction could not be brought to believe the untruths which Germany was circulating about England, the German propagandist had latterly begun to coin tales of England's inveterate hatred for America, which was being disseminated consciously by Germany's paid tools, unconsciously by pitiful dupes like Otto.

Guido angrily denied this latest calumny. He pointed out to Otto that many of England's most brilliant writers were and are avowed admirers of America. Arnold Bennett had rendered America an amazingly brilliant tribute which occupied an entire volume. Mr. Wells ever showed a great partiality for America and Americans. Trevelyan, in his classic work, "The American Revolution," showed an equal liking and respect for America. Sir Conan Doyle

allowed his Sherlock Holmes to say some very pretty things about the common destiny of the two great Anglo-Saxon nations, and Macaulay, to cite at least one colossus of by-gone days, in reviewing "Southey's Colloquies," said that it was "inconceivable that a man of his sensibility and imagination should look without pleasure and national pride on the vigorous youth of a great people, whose veins are filled with our blood, whose minds are nourished with our literature, and on whom is entailed the high inheritance of our civilization, our freedom and our glory."

Otto, as usual, became furious when confronted with cold facts which cut like a scythe through the cobwebs of vicious fancy which the Germans and the German-Americans were so busily spinning. He became very abusive. Never had his vituperation been quite so coarse. He said many unpleasant things in English, and finally burst into sulphurous German:

"Deine Speichelleckerei ist gerade zu ekelerregend."

Dalton and Stan did not understand, of course, but Guido, white with anger at being called a spittle-licker, said, curtly:

"You've gone too far, Otto. I've stood a whole lot from you. But this is too much. I shall never speak to you again."

Without waiting to make his farewells to the others, he rushed out of the room. Stan came pounding after him.

"I say, Guy, I'm awfully sorry—though of course I don't know what Otto said. Come on back. You know you'll make it up with Otto sooner or later. So why not now?"

"I'll never make it up with Otto," said Guido, explosively. "I'm through with Otto. Absolutely. Irrevocably. I'm sick of his—oh, good-bye."

Guido took a three-mile tramp to assuage his fury. On his way home he met Janet, who persuaded him to run in for a minute and see her mother. Mrs. Geddes had not been quite well for some time. The shock of Cecil's death had aggravated a chronic catarrh of the stomach.

The Professor and his wife were cosily ensconced in his study. It was a cool evening. The gas logs were burning; the shades and portieres were drawn, and the tea-wagon was standing close to hand. Janet's parents were sitting

in front of the fire, watching the leaping flames and the burning wood, writhing and contorting itself into the most fantastic shapes of bird and beast.

"Ask Guido to have some tea, Janet," said Mrs. Geddes. "And there are some delicious small cakes. You may have to ring for more milk, because I had cambric tea."

"Guido," said the Professor, "which do you prefer, English Breakfast or cambric tea?"

At this Janet burst out laughing, and Mrs. Geddes smiled indulgently at her big boy's nonsense, but poor Guido became woefully embarrassed. He saw that some joke was afoot which he did not in the least understand, and he was reduced to an extremity of shame by having to avow his ignorance as to the nature of cambric tea. It happened to him quite frequently that he did not understand jocularities of the Professor or Janet because of some colloquialism or facetious locution, of which he did not know the meaning.

Janet explained her father's little joke and rang for more milk.

"My wife is going to ask you for dinner next Sunday, Guido," the Professor resumed. He was in one of his semi-mischievous, semi-whimsical moods, and Guido sensed some new nonsense. "Herr Wesendonck is coming and I know you enjoy him as much as we do."

"Speak for yourself, Professor," said his wife. "If you invite Mr. Wesendonck for dinner next Sunday you will have to entertain him at a hotel or restaurant. I won't have him at my table again."

"Why not?" the Professor demanded, with his most magnificently innocent look. "His table manners are excellent."

"Now, Daddy, you are being naughty," said Janet, and to chastise her parent, kissed him on the brow.

"He's been very naughty all afternoon," said Mrs. Geddes, smiling broadly, as if she particularly enjoyed her husband's capers.

"My excellent spouse," said the Professor, "do you really and truly forbid me to invite Mr. Wesendonck to dine at your board?"

"You are, of course, free to ask whom you wish," said Mrs. Geddes, "but really, Ned, after that creature's dis-

gusting behavior to your dear old father—he's your father, you know, and not mine—I say it is unfilial in you, to say the least, to ask him here again."

"Now, my dear, my dear," remonstrated the Professor. "Was it the creature's behavior to my father, or my father's behavior to the creature, that pained you? I thought it was my sire who made all the personal remarks."

"Daddy, you are being very, very naughty," said Janet, and Mrs. Geddes exclaimed:

"Really, Professor, you are going too far."

"My dear, my dear," said the Professor, contritely, "I ask you to be logical. As a matter of fact it was my dear old father who said venomous things to Wesendonck and not the other way around. Not that I blamed my father. I thanked him for it. In words. Afterwards. You see, I could not have called our guest to order as sharply as my father did, who because of his age and his loveliness and his quaintness is quite a privileged character."

"Why do you wish to subject your father to further annoyance?" Mrs. Geddes asked, and Janet who was curling her father's hair around her fingers, whispered:

"Daddykins, dear old Granddaddy was terribly upset the other day, you know, and never even finished his first portion of goose, although he usually has two helpings of it."

"Well, you see," said the Professor, matching the fingers of either hand: "Your Granddaddy is going away for a few days over Sunday and so he won't be here to be annoyed by the Gryphon."

Janet crowed with delight.

"Or is the creature a Dodo?" the Professor inquired, with mock seriousness, "or a Tove, or a Borogrove?"

"Ned!" expostulated Mrs. Geddes, but Janet, clinging to her father, cried:

"We'll have him in for a tea-party and I'll cry: 'Off with his head.' That will suit Mother. Mother, won't it?"

"Guido, did you ever hear two grown people talk such a string of nonsense?" Mrs. Geddes demanded.

"I have never witnessed anything so delightful in my life," Guido replied, sincerely. It was not the first time that he had seen Janet and her father, when in a sportive mood, play with and around and about some English classic,

and on such occasions he could not have said what astonished him more, the Professor's almost juvenile vivacity or Janet's extended and intimate knowledge of English literature.

"You had to say that, of course," said Janet, laughing at Guido over her father's shoulder.

"By what compulsion must I?" Guido flung back, wondering whether Janet would recognize the quotation.

Janet cried, appreciatively:

"Oh, goody, goody!"

"I must exonerate myself," said the Professor. "It was all Janet's fault, Jane, this silly tra-la-la in which we have been indulging. She spoke of the goose of which my old father had less than his share. That brought to mind another old man whose jaws were too weak for anything tougher than suet, and yet he finished the goose and the beak, pray how did he manage to do it? And that, of course, slid my mind off on a siding which connected with the rest of my train of thought."

"Are you or are you not going to invite Wesendonck?"

"I am, unless you forbid it."

"I forbid—really, Ned——"

"Why do you want Casimir over here again?" Janet demanded.

"Well, we don't know we are moral unless we are tempted to commit an immoral act. We don't know we are patriotic unless we hear unpatriotic stuff. As I've told you before, that chap keeps my patriotism keyed up to a hundred and ninety-nine per cent. He keeps my indignation with Germany at a sizzling point."

"Daddy," Janet inquired, "what's sizzling point?"

"Sizzling point," the Professor replied, gravely, "is exactly as many degrees above boiling point as absolute zero is below zero. He keeps my humanity furbished up as brightly as a well-polished cabasset."

"You've been reading about the Middle-Age again," Janet said, accusingly.

"And why shouldn't Middle-Age read about the Middle-Ages?" demanded the Professor.

"I give it up," said Mrs. Geddes, leaning back in her chair, contentedly.

"Well," said Janet, "my humanity, and my patriotism

and my indignation are all in first-class trim and tip-top working order. So there is no need for me to hang around when the Gryphon comes. Guido, won't you ask your mother to invite me to dinner next Sunday?"

The Professor appeared to be scandalized.

"My dear child!" he protested, and then, "Jane, dear you hear what your daughter said just now?"

"Of course I heard it," said Mrs. Geddes, quickly. "You've brought her up. So don't blame me. Blame yourself. Janet, your father seems displeased with you."

"Daddy, are you displeased with me?"

"My child, never."

Suddenly they all fell silent, and then, after a little while, Janet said:

"Here we are all quite merry and contented and poor Cecil——"

"We cannot bring him back by weeping and lamenting," said Mrs. Geddes.

"He would not wish us to be dull and disconsolate," remarked the Professor.

"He was brave," said Mrs. Geddes. "Never a braver lad. Oh, the crime of it, the crime of it!" she cried, suddenly, a strange fierceness in her usually diffident voice. "Boys like that to be sacrificed——" she broke off suddenly. Tears stifled her voice.

This ending of his pleasant little visit did not make Guido any more kindly disposed toward Otto. Could Otto not have run after him and apologized as he had apologized to Otto on a previous occasion?

He went home in a very black frame of mind.

CHAPTER V

ALL through the spring a resolution had been growing and quickening Guido. He said nothing to his mother, divining opposition, but he took Professor Geddes into his confidence. Professor Geddes approved, tentatively. It was all very well to apprentice himself to an airman for the summer months, and there was a hangar quite near Waldheim where a mechanic who was in process of becoming college-bred would doubtless find employment easily enough. But the Professor thought—he was quite unwontedly strenuous in making the point—that Guido ought to complete his college course before thinking seriously of becoming an airman. After all, we were not at war. The Professor had something of the same feeling as Stan's father. As neutrals, he thought, it behooved us to confine ourselves to Red Cross work, and to feeding Belgium, and to succoring France. The Germans undoubtedly were behaving very badly, but as long as America chose to stand by—and there was no doubt that the country at large did not desire war—the Professor thought it was fairer and more honest that America's sons should not do any actual fighting.

And then he spoiled his lovely homily by injudiciously praising the son of a friend of his who had died while flying in the Lafayette Escradille——

Guido took his courage in both his hands and approached his mother. She took the suggestion far more calmly than he had thought she would.

"I think you ought to build up a little first," she said. "I don't think they would want you as you are. Perhaps—two or three years hence——"

"It may all be over then," said Guido, shrewdly guessing that she was playing for time.

"Well," said Frau Ursula, and explained her position.

She was, to begin with, a very ardent Wilsonite. She thought Mr. Wilson quite magnificently magnificent. Like

Guido, she thought the Violation of Belgium should have been cause sufficient for America to declare war. But, unfortunately, there were all the incredible pro-Germans to be reckoned with, and that contingent which was almost equally incredible, the persons who were indifferent; and as Mr. Wilson was not the representative of a part of the people of the United States, but of all of the people of the United States, he had, of course, to take all these widely divergent, conflicting currents of public opinion into consideration. She was enormously impressed by the breadth which he thus evinced. She said that in her estimation he was the Third Great American, an opinion in which Guido heartily concurred. And—to cut a long story short—in the end Mr. Wilson's policy of Watchful Waiting might be the best, not only for the United States, but for the entire world, because, if we went to war right off it would mean a crippling of forces right here at home and the crippling of our men abroad, and all that while Germany was still lusty and baleful with the fever of war. In a little while the process of abrasion, of attrition would begin. Then, if a new foe, entirely uncrippled and unhandicapped and free from the dreadful war weariness which, in spite of their marvelous energy and more than heroic willingness to endure and to suffer was already clutching at the throats of the European nations—if such a foe with illimitable resources and man-power were to be hurled at the German forces at the psychological moment, it was easy to see that Germany would then be bound to collapse utterly.

This being so, what not wait for the psychological moment, when his—Guido's—life would be worth probably ten times as much as at the present moment? If he were to be killed like Cecil—well, women had endured that sort of thing ever since the beginning of the world. Her lip trembled violently as she said this, showing that her heroism was not as tear-proof as she would have had him believe.

Frau Ursula won out, of course, in the long run. Guido promised that until he was through college or war was declared he would not tease her about going to war; she, on the other hand, promised that as soon as war should be declared, she would not oppose his going.

Henceforth Frau Ursula had an additional worry to live with. She was as loyally American and as patriotic a woman as ever drew breath, and she came of a race in whom love of country and eager willingness to die for it if need be are ingrainedly native virtues. But patriotism, be it ever so strong, ever so sincere, ever so self-sacrificing, does not anesthetize the throbbing pain which gnaws at a woman's heart when husband or son are engaged in war's shifting and truceless panorama of hazards.

The poor woman had sporadically known a surcease from her anxiety touching Guido's Synthetic Destiny. From long neighborliness to it she had, in a way, become reconciled and even enamored of it, doubtless deeming, as others beside her deemed, that Guido's Destiny would eventualize in a specific for some ailment of the race peculiarly agreeable to herself. Now-a-days she rarely connected the Synthesis with Varvara Alexandrovna. The figure of Guido's heroic but ill-advised mother had become dim and shadowy. Almost ten years had elapsed before Vasalov's unexpected appearance, and the memory of him also had become phantasmal and unreal.

Then, as she had all but crossed the Synthetic Experiment off the slate of life as too tenuous to merit serious anxiety, the phantasmal unreality, from being a negligible quantity, had suddenly assumed new life and vigor and, having been disembodied, re-embodied itself.

Vasalov appeared at dusk one Sunday evening. Frau Ursula was sitting in her favorite chair and corner, reading, when the maid ushered in the visitor.

Frau Ursula did not recognize him at once, which was due to the dim light, not to any marked change in his appearance. In fact, at first glance, Vasalov seemed to have changed surprisingly little in the ten years which had elapsed since Frau Ursula had last seen him. His heavy thatch of black hair, it is true, showed stray threads of gray, giving it the not unpleasingly piebald appearance of the pelt of the silver fox, save that the background of the fox's coat is light and Vasalov's hair was black. He was slightly thinner than of old, and his face was almost cadaverous in appearance.

Of greater significance than this slight toll levied by time upon his physique, was the nervous change which had

taken place in him. He seemed now to be in a state of continual excitement, in a sort of hectic fever of the soul which manifested itself in restless movements, in a very perceptible uneasiness and in a quick, abrupt, almost explosive way of speaking which Frau Ursula at first set down to unmannerliness and audacity.

Vasalov wasted no time in artistic preambles or literary flourishes. He plunged at once into the very heart of the matter which had brought him.

"I think it advisable," he began, "to acquaint Guido now with the strange events and circumstances surrounding his birth." Vasalov always referred to the pre-natal pact between Guido's parents as if some Scriptural phenomena, such as a splitting open of the earth, or a vision of the Angel Gabriel, or an emergence of the dead from their graves, had attended it.

Frau Ursula said, coldly:

"He was informed almost a year ago."

Vasalov grew white with sudden emotion.

"He was prematurely informed," he said.

"It was unavoidable."

"Unavoidable? How so?"

Frau Ursula lapped herself about in her finest of fine airs. A coronet of strawberry leaves could have added nothing to her chill dignity.

"I had no control over the circumstances which made the telling a matter of necessity," she said, coldly.

"You are not being very explicit, I must say," Vasalov rejoined, in a voice which held a threat, and fear laid cold fingers against Frau Ursula's heart-strings.

"There is no reason why I should be explicit," she said. "The circumstances referred to concerned myself only."

Vasalov bowed.

Frau Ursula heard Guido enter the hall at this moment, and called to him to come in.

Guido, on entering the room, experienced a curious sense of having met the stranger before some time in the dim past. The boy could not have reconstructed that meeting—it was one of those hazy, nebulous recollections which seem like the echo of a previous life. A secondary impression, which conveyed to him the startling sense that there subsisted between himself and the dark, gaunt

stranger an extraordinary resemblance of feature, coloring, and build, informed him of Vasalov's identity.

"Guido, your mother's cousin, Prince Vasalov," said Frau Ursula in a tone as diffident as if Vasalov's visit had been of no greater moment than the call of a book agent or of a stray afternoon visitor. Frau Ursula's manner further infuriated Vasalov. He changed color and his eyes flashed.

This unconscious demonstration of annoyance on Vasalov's part had a curious effect. Vasalov, angry, looked even more like Guido, angry, than Vasalov, unstirred by emotion looked like Guido in a correspondingly placid frame of mind. The resemblance, which had hitherto escaped Vasalov's perceptions, suddenly came home to him, for Guido was looking at him with anything but kindly eyes. Vasalov's anger subsided.

"We are very like, Guido Guidovich," he said, in a pleased tone

"Physically, yes, Prince Vasalov," said Guido, in a tone that expressed anything but pleasure.

"And why, may I ask, 'Prince Vasalov?'" Vasalov demanded in his new ecstatic and excited manner. "You have been taught Russian and are therefore acquainted with the familiar form of address among relatives and friends. Why, then, 'Prince Vasalov?' For we are related, as you know."

"Physically, yes," said Guido, in the same quietly wrathful tone as before.

"Physically!" Vasalov laughed. "Can a relationship be based on other than physical ties?"

"There are spiritual ties," Guido rejoined, grimly. "And spiritually no relationship exists between yourself and my mother on the one hand, and myself on the other. I have nothing in common with assassins."

Vasalov sprang to his feet. He fairly seethed with fury. He writhed and gyrated. He fumed. The veins stood out on his forehead like chords. Finally he spurted out, addressing Frau Ursula:

"This is infamous of you."

"Have a care, sir, have a care," Guido cried, lapsing from German into Russian, and in Russian Vasalov replied:

"You do not know what you are saying. Your mind has been poisoned."

"My mind has not been poisoned," Guido replied. "My foster-mother, whom I consider my only real and true mother, has sought with unparalleled generosity to palliate crimes which, since she herself is kind and true, she must hold in abhorrence. She has sought to extenuate Varvara Alexandrovna's activities on the ground of moral, economic, psychological and philosophical necessities. Only yesterday she besought me to temper the harshness of my judgment. But as I feel I feel. I have said."

Vasalov breathed furiously for a few moments, as a man will who is winded with fatigue or with anger. Then, in German, he said:

"I am returning to Russia. I expect to communicate with your mother. Am I to tell her, who has languished in solitary confinement as many years as you are old, that her only child spurns and rejects her?"

"If you tell her that," the boy said, coldly, "you will be telling her a truth in the withholding of which I have no interest."

Vasalov grew livid with emotion. Frau Ursula, all her haughtiness gone, laid a hand on Vasalov's arm, as she said:

"He shall not let you go like that. Guido, you will wish, I think, to send your mother some other message."

Guido met Frau Ursula's gaze defiantly. She regarded him rebukingly, appealingly. He said, after a moment, compelled into graciousness by her look:

"I beg your pardon, sir. I have been unforgivably rude and brutal."

"And you retract your cruel words?" Vasalov asked, quietly.

"How can I," Guido cried. All his anger was gone, and the pained, wistful air which he wore became him well. "How can I," he repeated. "I wish I had not said that which I said, but having said it how can I take my words back? I cannot exculpate my mother in Russia as my American mother does. I cannot do it. I cannot even think of her with compassion. I have tried faithfully to do at least that—and I have failed signally. I am sorry. But the truth is the truth."

"I suppose," said Vasalov, "it would be entirely useless to persuade you to come to Russia with me." His spirits seemed greatly dashed.

"For what purpose?" Guido demanded.

"There is much work to be done in Russia."

"Work? What sort of work?"

"Work having to do with the freeing of Russia."

"By assassination? By bombing officials? No, Prince Vasalov, I think not."

"You misunderstand me cruelly," said Vasalov, speaking with great earnestness. "In Russia your Destiny would seek you out. In coming with me to Russia you would be meeting it half-way. No influence of any sort will be brought to bear upon you in the performance of your work, that work for which you were pre-destined and which shall be done by you in any way or manner which may recommend itself to your judgment."

Guido stared at Vasalov in amazement. Then his eyes sought his mother's face. It was entirely non-committal.

"Now, in war-time?" she asked. "Why should Guido go to Russia now?"

"Because now, in war-time, we who hope to free Russia may accomplish more than in times of peace, as we can work with less danger of detection," Vasalov replied. Then, turning to Guido, he resumed his entreaties. He produced statistics telling how many unfortunates had been banished to Siberia in the last twenty years, and maps to illustrate where they had died or where they were still immured. He told quite incredible tales of long-sustained suffering. He submitted tables of figures, comparing the poverty of the peasants and the extravagance of the nobles. He explained the intricacies of Russia's bureaucratic system which entailed, almost as an inevitable corollary, a gigantic secondary system of graft and blackmailing.

Last of all he produced memoranda of the geographical distribution and numerical strength of their organization. It made a formidable showing. For the first time Guido realized the full import of the faith which the Vasalovs and their followers reposed in himself and his Destiny, when Vasalov concluded with:

"The way has been prepared for you. Those who be-

lieve in you and who are waiting prayerfully for your coming are legion."

Guido was greatly moved. In the past he had never taken his Destiny or the Synthesis Experiment seriously, but it is one thing to scoff at a hypothetical destiny which is as vapory as nebulae, and another thing to have that destiny presented to you on a charger with every indication that the palpable homage and the enthusiastic acclaim of thousands are yours—waiting not your asking but merely your acceptance.

The boy's disbelief in his Destiny was shaken. It was shaken by Vasalov's faith, a faith of longer standing, and of greater substantiality than his unfaith, a faith quite amazingly strong because conditioned by a constricted and continually narrowing outlook upon life.

Was there then, Guido questioned himself, something in his Destiny after all? The thought did not exhilarate him. He felt that his Destiny might yet be thrust upon him. He would achieve it—never.

But, was it wise, was it honest, was it kind to refuse to meet that Destiny half-way—as Vasalov had phrased it? Was it fair? Was it humane? Russia—well, he had heard enough about Russia and read enough about Russia to know that Darkest Russia was darker and more sinister than anything an American could conceive. Was he shirking his manifest duty in repudiating his Destiny? He could not doubt the sincerity of Vasalov's assurance that no one would seek to influence or direct him in his task. And even more convincing than Vasalov's words was his manner, in which the subtle deference, which men render an acknowledged captain of men, was mingled with the soft suasion which is Middle-Age's prerogative in dealing with Youth.

For a few moments Guido was tossed tempestuously to and fro on a heaving sea of doubt. Something of Vasalov's enthusiasm had communicated itself to him. He fought it down. Russia beckoned to him—Turgenieff's, Dostoevsky's, Tolstoy's, Gorky's, Tschekov's Russia seemed to hold out bleeding hands imploring succor and support and sane leadership; sane leadership above all—which would work with moral weapons for moral ends.

Desperately the boy strove to beat down mere emotion,

to disentangle himself from the compassion which was clouding his vision and shackling his brain.

If he was to accept the burden of his Destiny, it must be from an honest, dispassionate conviction that he was doing so because there was no possibility of his disappointing those hundreds of thousands of patiently waiting souls, because he was equal to the stupendous task which confronted him and them, because, in brief, he himself had arrived at an unselfish, unbiased belief in his own Destiny.

The thought of that cleared his brain like a dash of cold water. The tempest in his soul was succeeded by a dead calm.

"I am Russian rather than German, Slav rather than Teuton in that I allow myself to be swayed like a reed in the wind," he reflected, bitterly. Was his despised German blood a sort of safety valve, a condensor, a concentrator and distributing agent for his inflammable Slav enthusiasm?

He said:

"I cannot go with you to Russia because I do not believe in my Destiny."

"Whether you believe in it or not you cannot escape it."

"At any rate, I shall not go in quest of it."

Vasalov regarded Guido for a long time with his piercing black eyes, so like the boy's own.

"Ah," he exclaimed, "I made a great mistake in selecting Sergius Ivanovich to teach you. I counted upon the contrariety in human nature. I hoped that, disgusted with Dobronov's theorizing on non-resistance and pacificism, you would swing about of your own initiative to our way of thinking. I am punished for disobeying Varvara Alexandrovna's express wish that no influence of any sort, direct or indirect, be brought to bear upon you. I hoped through Sergius Ivanovich to influence you in a way so oblique that even myself would be cheated into believing that there had been no influence whatever. I have failed. I admit my error. I throw myself upon your mercy. Do not punish Varvara Alexandrovna and Russia for my unethics and my blunder. Come with me to Russia. Do not be afraid of your Destiny. You need not believe in it, or acknowledge it, even to yourself. If you have a Destiny—and there have been moments when I say frankly that

I have doubted it—it will find you out. If you have not a Destiny, we—Russia, the Cause—are the losers, not yourself. Come with me to Russia. Do not force me to return alone. Do not force me to say to those waiting hundreds of thousands of souls, 'The boy in whom you had faith has grown to man's estate. He is a child no longer. He is a man in understanding. But he will have none of you. The Destiny in which you believe is to him as if it were not; it is as chaff to him, while you know it to be wheat. You have faith, but he has none. The power that resides in him he will not use. He has abandoned you who would have suffered hunger, stripes, torture rather than desert him.'

"Guido Guidovich, I appeal to you as man to man—do not force me into this humiliating position!"

Vasalov had spoken with an earnestness so profound as to verge on solemnity, and Guido was deeply stirred. But he was stirred without being swayed. True, his erstwhile appraisal of Varvara Alexandrovna, which had taken into account only the accomplished fact, ignoring motives and attendant conditions, suddenly seemed to him crass and narrow. Nevertheless he would not have cared to lose sight of it to the extent of allowing only motivation to count, of allowing motivation to obscure the intrinsic morality or immorality of an act.

A few minutes earlier Guido had censured himself for his Slav volatility. Now that Slav instability seemed less incomprehensible than the German inflexibility and self-sufficiency which he had practiced. Nevertheless he clove with all his might to his rigid belief in the essential rightness or wrongness of things, and he perceived, with a lucidity as impartial as if the character under the microscope had not been his own, that his inflexibility would at times step in and save him from the consequences of his mutability.

"Prince Vasalov," he said, "believe me when I say that if I believed, honestly believed, that I might be of use to Russia, I would obey Varvara Alexandrovna's request and go along with you. But, surely, a man destined to accomplish great things feels the call within himself—the vocation, as the Catholics say. It may be that I am too young, too inexperienced. It may be again that I am deficient

mentally in the qualities which make for leadership. It may also be that my qualifications, great or humble, run in a direction other than political. At any rate, I feel overwhelmingly on one point: I must not, I dare not go to Russia with you. I feel that it would be a monstrous injustice, that it would be an act of madness to go to Russia to fulfill a mission, a destiny in which I do not believe."

He recalled Mrs. Erdman's request to spare Frau Ursula all unkind comments on the Synthesis for which she had endured so much. Speaking with great gentleness, he continued:

"I refrain from all criticisms upon the Synthetic Experiment. Please understand that. Who am I to judge? If I disappoint the hopes of my Russian mother, who lies in prison, or of my mother here, that will be a pain almost as great to bear for myself as for them."

"At least," Vasalov cried impetuously, "you have softened in your attitude toward Russia—toward us."

"Yes, that is true," Guido rejoined. "I do not know whether your words or your manner touched me. I think it was your sincerity. But respect for your judgment cannot in any way alter my beliefs or modify my convictions. It can only serve to temper the severity of my judgment in appraising yourself and your cousin."

"Ah," cried Vasalov, "I am satisfied to have accomplished this much. You have given me back the faith in your Destiny. I will press you no further. You are, as you said before, very young. Nor do I express the belief that you will ultimately espouse our way of thinking and doing. The moderate position which you now take convinces me that the Synthesis will yet blossom and bear fruit. Say what you will, deny your Destiny, scoff at the Synthetic Experiment, disavow your capabilities, it will yet be given to you to light the fires of true liberty throughout the world."

"Poor, misguided fanatic," thought Guido. But the eerie feeling which previously had almost swept him off his feet was again sending through him stray tendrils of emotion. Nor did he succeed in sloughing it off entirely while Vasalov remained in the house.

A little later, Vasalov, declining Frau Ursula's invitation

to supper, made his farewell. Guido, to Frau Ursula's great joy, so far governed his animosity for Varvara Alexandrovna as to send her a perfunctory message of conventional good-will. Vasalov received this token of Guido's conciliatory attitude with great and open rejoicing. And Guido, escorting him to the door, did the honors of the Hauser domicile with an opulence of good-nature for which Frau Ursula, when he came back into the room, thanked him with tears in her eyes. And—greatest self-conquest of all—he even called Vasalov "Dmitri Stepanovich" in bidding him Godspeed.

Frau Ursula was very loquacious after Vasalov was gone. Her imagination had caught fire. She did not, perhaps, believe in Guido's Destiny in the way Vasalov did, but she had an abiding faith in his Destiny in a vague, large, unbounded, uncondensed sort of way.

Guido stood it as long as he could. Then he said:

"For goodness sakes, Mother, let us talk about something else."

And talk about something else she did. It so happened that she had an item of interest to tell Guido.

"I have a great piece of news for you," she said, and without urging him to hazard the three traditional guesses, she told him that Tante Baumgarten had called and had wept bitterly because Otto had accepted a position to go abroad as an engineer's assistant. The engineer was working for a French firm, and expected to be sent into Belgium. The pay was good, and it was probable that Otto would return early in October. Otto had seen the President of the Faculty, and the President had taken the matter up with the Faculty, and the Faculty had concurred with the President in saying that if Otto could get back by October he should be allowed to continue with his class, although such a proceeding was most unusual.

"But then," Tante Baumgarten had added, with pardonable pride, "my Otto has an unusual head."

"Yes," Guido assented, with a sort of grim generosity, "he has, excepting when it comes the War, and then he is as thick as the bluntest *caboche* ever driven into wood by a hammer." He and Otto had ignored each other since the quarrel in Stan's rooms.

Frau Ursula laughed.

"That sounds quite Teutonic, Guido," she said, slyly humorous.

The news concerning Otto left Guido with a vague sense of uneasiness which he could not explain and which increased rather than diminished as the evening wore on. Some potential thought seemed to be stirring in his mind clamoring for birth. It was while he was undressing that this thought, full-fledged and ripe, sprang aggressively into life.

Otto was not the sort of lad to serve a cause he held despicable for money. Why, then, had he consented to accompany this engineer to France and to Belgium?

Guido grew hot with a sense of sickening foreboding. He tried to dismiss his suspicion as unworthy both of himself and Otto. But it persisted, and would not be banished, and in despair Guido finally found himself constrained to turn it over and study it from every side. Mental fingering did not better matters. The more Guido thought about Otto's abrupt departure, the more certain he became that Otto's pro-German sympathies were at the bottom of his European trip.

What then to do?

In agony of spirit Guido wrestled with the problem, but the most finical logic is rendered sterile if, instead of from a fixed premise, deductions must be made from a flux of unstable possibilities. Morally certain Guido might be of Otto's ulterior motives in going abroad. But what proof had he? Guido was keen-witted enough to recognize a certain analogy between his position and the position of the pro-Germans in regard to England. The Germans had no proofs of "perfidious Albion's," perfidious intentions; but, believing in them, they condemned England and indulged themselves in an orgy of hate. Similarly he had no proofs of Otto's intention to practice treachery toward his employers and toward the Allies. Appearances were dead against Otto, it is true, but he had no means of actually knowing what Otto's intentions were.

He felt that his reasoning was not as lucid as usual. He accused himself of practicing sophistry in order to spare his affection for Otto, which, in spite of the surface estrangement, was as strong as ever. He concluded finally that, as in all speculations in which the emotions of the

speculator are intimately interbound, he was in no position to judge impartially. His very desire to be fair rendered him unfair. He decided to lay the entire matter before his mother.

He presented the case to her the next morning in as prejudiced and unfair a light as he possibly could. He did this purposely, hoping to draw from his mother an incisive denial. Frau Ursula disappointed his expectations. Apparently she did not comprehend the possibilities of mischief accruing to Otto's position.

"*Mein lieber Junge!*" she exclaimed. "What does it matter? What harm could Otto possibly do?"

"What harm," Guido echoed, aghast, and to illustrate his point chose as an example a bridge over which provision wagons or troops were to pass. "If Otto sent word to the enemy at what time this passage was to be effected—good heavens!—don't you see what it would mean? The enemy's barrage would wipe out the entire division—might wipe out the crucial point of a salient."

"But how," Frau Ursula persisted, with the maddening minuteness of the unimaginative mind, "how, to begin with, could he get word to the enemy?"

"In a dozen ways. That's beside the point. Mother, do you think Otto would do such a thing?"

Frau Ursula did not reply. Apparently her perplexity was as great as Guido's.

"When does he sail, Mother?"

"He sailed last night."

"On what vessel?"

"I do not know."

Guido walked up and down the room and around the breakfast table, on which the coffee and biscuits were growing cold. Suddenly he began beating clenched right hand against the palm of his left hand.

"Mother," he cried, "I cannot denounce my dearest friend, I simply cannot. After all I am not certain. I cannot be certain. If he turns spy—he will be clumsy about it, you may be sure. He's too fundamentally honest and straightforward to do that sort of thing successfully. And they'll get him. They'll get him and hang him. Yes, they'll hang him." And Guido continued his wild perambulations around the room, repeating, "they'll hang him"

until the ominous words rang in his own ears with the portentous wailing of a funeral dirge.

Suddenly, he demanded:

"*Mutterchen*, ought I to denounce him?"

"If you do, you will never forgive yourself."

"And if I don't I will never forgive myself."

"Oh, yes, I think so."

"But then," Guido said, "it is not a matter of my conscience at all. It's a question of the stupendous things that may happen——"

"After all," said Frau Ursula, with great calm, "we are not at war. Technically we are a neutral. And if he does anything of that sort, it will not be done on this soil. If he were operating here—it would be an entirely different matter. Your duty then, no matter how painful, would be entirely plain."

"Yes," Guido assented, "that is true." For the first time the circle in which his mind was speeding about seemed to present a point through which an egress might be effected.

"Besides," Frau Ursula continued tranquilly, "you have no proofs. As you yourself say. You haven't a single, solitary, valid proof. On the other hand, you have quarreled with Otto. Quite violently. In denouncing him, having no proof to produce, will your action, in view of your recent quarrel, not seem like—well—spite-work?"

"Merciful heavens!" Guido exclaimed.

"You have no proofs," Frau Ursula resumed. "After all, you may be entirely mistaken. We know how hard pressed he is for money. He may have accepted the position merely because of the salary. Or, he may feel a perfectly legitimate interest in going to the front. Otto was always an adventuresome boy. He probably considers himself nothing but an instrument in the hands of his superior, and is going to knock what money and what experiences he can out of the excursion."

"He didn't consider himself merely an instrument when he refused to put profanities into a letter he was typing," Guido rejoined. "And this—well to him the Allies are infinitely more wicked than the most wicked word ever devised."

"No," he cried, with sudden vehemence, "he cannot possibly be thinking only of the salary. I couldn't do it. Not

if my life depended on it, could I do anything to help the German cause."

"Then," said Frau Ursula, calmly playing her trump, "Otto probably can."

Guido did not understand at once, and asked her to repeat.

"In war morality Otto and you are diametrically opposed to each other," said Frau Ursula, and continued to display her trump from all sides. "I have never known you to agree upon a single point. Therefore, if, as you say, you would not be able to regard a position such as Otto's merely from a financial view-point, Otto probably is able so to regard it. And probably does so regard it."

"By George," Guido cried, "that's an idea! Mother, I believe you are right."

The lucid cleverness of women when it comes to soothing and comforting their men is uncanny. This reflection occurred to Guido a little later, as he was eating his bacon and eggs. Had his mother invented her trump expressly to assuage his tortured feelings? He sat studying her face narrowly in the hope of surprising upon it some illuminating expression. But she sat placidly reading an item in the *Frauenbriefkasten* which had caught her eye, and the expression of her face was the expression of transient content that informs the interested reader.

Guido realized that she had disposed of the subject to her own complete satisfaction. His belief in her sincerity restored, he examined Frau Ursula's trump anew. It looked good to him. He finally accepted it the more readily because, in spite of Otto's war sympathies, he really had an implicit and indomitable faith in Otto's personal sense of honor.

Nevertheless a blind, unreasoning fear that Otto had embarked upon a career of espionage harrowed him sporadically all through the ensuing summer, which he spent working as a mechanic for the aviator at Three Corners.

Mrs. Geddes had invited Frau Ursula to spend the summer at "Waldheim" in order to be near to Guido, and Frau Ursula had accepted upon condition that she should defray her part of the expenses.

It was a hard summer for Guido. Physical work did

not come easy to him, and in August he caught a severe cold which necessitated his going to bed for a few days. He knocked off work after that and enjoyed the remainder of his vacation thoroughly. Janet was as splendid a comrade as ever, but their summer was not as happy as the summer that had gone before. They were well and in the flesh, but Cecil slept somewhere under an unmarked mound in France. And Cecil, somewhat to their surprise, dominated the place and cried out to them from every favorite chair and every favorite corner. The very books the English lad had read in previous summers, some of which were annotated in his hand, seemed instinct with his being, and Guido and Janet were oppressed at times with the morbid but understandable feeling that it was cruel, preposterous and indecent to be alive and well when Cecil was dead. Tacitly, without any spoken agreement, they eschewed picnics and dances, declining the invitations that came their way on some plea or other.

For Guido there was added to his sorrow for Cecil the infinitely greater strain of his anxiety touching Otto's activity abroad. It had not been his intention to tell Janet about this, but one Sunday evening, when the full moon hung above the opposite ridge like a golden lantern, revealing strange images and weird figures in the familiar face of the silent mountain, he unbosomed himself to her of his trouble. She listened with grave attention.

"You could not have denounced him," she said. "Why, you just couldn't. Even if we had been certain and at war."

"If we had been at war," Guido said quickly, "I would have been certain of his innocence."

"Yes, that is true," Janet assented. "Anyhow, folks do that sort of thing in melodramas. But in real life somebody else does the informing. You know that is so."

Guido looked a little shocked. He had expected an expression of Spartan sentiment from Janet. She read his thoughts and said, laughing:

"I believe you are disappointed, Guido. You wanted me to find fault with you, I do believe. Well, Guido, I couldn't do that. If you want someone to find fault with you, you must apply elsewhere."

"Oh, I don't know that I want to be found fault with

particularly," Guido replied, "any more than anyone else does. But I always thought of you as rectitude unmarred by any considerations of humanity. I had you in mind a good deal while trying to puzzle out this Otto business. I said to myself, 'If I were engaged in any dubious business of this sort, and Janet suspected it, *she'd* denounce me as quick as you can say Jack Robinson.'"

"Well, I wouldn't," said Janet, "if you were a pro-German, I'd be more likely to fall in with your views, and change my opinions, than to find fault with yours."

Having delivered herself of this remarkable statement, which bubbled from her lips quite spontaneously, the girl came to an abrupt halt. Confusion, stark and terrifying, swept over her. She was appalled by the tacit confession contained in her words. The color leaped to her cheeks and mounted to her hair. Her neck, her bosom, her very arms and hands were invaded by the flag of maidenly shame and embarrassment. She felt as if her entire being was being swallowed up in this tremendous blush. And at the same time a terrible vertigo assailed her. If she had not been firmly seated in her chair, she thought she must have fallen to the ground. The world swam before her eyes, and she shrank back further into the shadows, for the moonlight was so bright that she thought if Guido should happen to turn his face to hers he must read the secret of her shameful but glorious love for him in her complete discomfiture.

Guido, not being a seismograph, was entirely oblivious of the volcanic disturbances which were going on in his immediate proximity, and, seeing in her words nothing but an exaggerated notion of loyalty to a friend, said:

"Oh, no, you wouldn't, Janet:

"I would not hear your enemy say so,
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself——"

"Heavens and earth," thought Janet. "He can quote Shakespeare. At such a moment. He *can* quote Shakespeare."

"No, Janet," Guido continued, speaking with considerable enthusiasm, "you are not the sort of girl to accept her

opinions ready-made. Why, I've heard you challenge your own father's judgment. You would never accept the opinion of a friend of your own age without first plucking it to pieces and investigating it thoroughly for yourself."

Janet felt reassured by this time that Guido had seen nothing unusual in her all too obvious words. Oddly enough, she was almost chagrined that this should be so. Later, when she experienced a sudden mistrust in his obtuseness, she was again enveloped in the hot flame of a modesty which has done violence to itself. Several days elapsed before she became fully convinced that her unintentional confession had fallen upon deaf ears. Candid and confiding as she was as a rule, she could not bring herself to take either of her parents into her confidence in this matter, and her feelings for Guido, for being thus blind, ran the entire gamut of emotions: rage at his stupidity, joy at the complete absence of self-evaluation which made his stupidity possible, adoration of his modesty. The episode ended with Janet's being more in love with her unsuspecting swain than ever.

Guido reverted to the matter of Otto a few days later, and this time Janet talked the affair over quite seriously with him. It is easier to discuss suspected treason in broad daylight than under a tantalizing full moon.

Janet thought it quite likely that Otto had gone over with the intention of acting as a spy for the Germans. What of it? There was no use in calling all German sympathizers hard names and in dragging in the twisted and distorted German psychology which, heaven knows, was quite bad enough as it was. He, Guido, had wanted to fly for France, and probably would still do so. Cecil had fought for England. Otto, probably, wanted to do secret service work for Germany. We were a neutral and, well—Nathan Hale had been a spy.

"And there you are," she concluded.

Grossvater Geddes was a strangely changed man. The sweet gracious air of youthful enthusiasm, which he had worn with the same pretty ostentation as his velvet house-jackets and his wonderful waistcoats, was gone. Gone was the happy smile, the merry twinkle of his eye, the resilience of his step. He who only a summer ago had thought nothing of a five-mile walk, now complained of

being tired after a stroll of only half a mile. And, most significant of all, it was noticed that he avoided speaking German as much as possible. Once in a while he lapsed into his native tongue, for which he had always professed such a love, but usually the old *Achtundvierziger* now spoke in his stiff-jointed, rusty-hinged English.

Half a mile from Waldheim lived a German-American family by the name of Seebold. The Seebolds and Grossvater Geddes had struck up a friendship in the first year of their mutual sojourn on Mountaintop which had remained constant ever since. The Seebolds were cultivated, musical, well-read, thoroughly delightful folks. In the matter of the War they took the view of the average German. Grossvater Geddes, during the previous summer, had expostulated individually and collectively with the various members of the Seebold family through many a long summer evening. This year the divergence in their views was greater than ever, as Grossvater Geddes was sheering away more and more from the German angle. And so, although the Seebolds bowed pleasantly enough to Grossvater Geddes, and Grossvater Geddes called out an amiable "good-morning" or "good-evening," the old pleasant footing had been destroyed.

Late one afternoon Guido went off for a walk. He strolled down to the little hollow fringed by century-old pines, where Janet had discovered him the previous summer after their first and only quarrel. The hollow was so heavily shaded that twilight reigned there even at noon. The fragrance from smoldering pine needles underneath and from the living pines overhead, and the sweet, cool, woodsy smell of sassafrass and witch hazel and rag-weed and honest mother Earth and all the myriad of delicious-smelling flowers and weeds and shrubs which she nurtured bounteously upon her brown bosom, was indescribable. Guido sat down upon a moss-covered bolder, and, closing his eyes, greedily drank in the incense-laden air.

He loved the spot. As often as his leisure permitted he had come here throughout the summer to inhale the balsamic fragrance and to meditate. The place was as medicinal as a tonic. Often it had seemed to him that he had seen fantastically shaped creatures, elves, gnomes, wood-nymphs and naiads hiding behind tree-trunk or peep-

ing from behind a boulder in the dry bed of the mountain rill whose voice was stilled excepting in the season of spring freshets or after a heavy and prolonged rain.

To-day, as he sat there, a strange thing happened. When he opened his eyes he saw that the fantastic shapes which had borne him spiritual company so often before were visibly there. They were all about him, looking up from the roots of a giant fir, glancing down from its swaying branches, flitting hither and thither through the cathedral aisles rendered more fragrant by the balsam of the pines than ever temple aisle by swinging censor.

But they were not the gnomes or brownies who usually inhabited the place. Differently shaped and differently garbed creatures they were. The color of their raiment was the shade of the oak leaf in autumn. Upon their heads they wore long, pointed hoods, and their jerkins were belted, almost like a Norfolk jacket. Their garb was a monochrome, fitting well with their faces, which were old and pinched and weazened. And among these gnomes mingled dwarfs of a different brood, dwarfs with merry eyes, and sleek, shining faces, and fat little bodies; and they were clad in a pretty medley of brown and green, with handsome garters and buckles and fol-da-rols, like miniature green Robin Hoods.

The sinister-looking dwarfs were the *Zwerge*, who had played so strange a part in the life of Little Snow-White. They were the intimates of *Ruebensahl* and a host of other inhabitants of German fairy tales. And the jolly-looking dwarfs were the *Heinselmaennchen*, those kindly, humanity-loving gnomes who, when a seemingly hopeless task is valiantly well begun, whether the task is a child's sampler or a man's work upon the completion of which depends his livelihood, come at night and, while the worker sleeps the sleep of exhaustion which follows hard toil, finish his task for him with nimble and deft fingers.

German gnomes! *Zwerge* and *Heinselmaennchen*! Here in America, in the woods which had once been sacred to Indian and buffalo and antelope! How might that be! Guido shivered. The illusion was all but complete, and to round it out the tinkling of a distant mountain stream seemed suddenly to be infused with a melody. It was a melody heard years ago, as a child, at some Christmas

celebration, and it bore the name of *Die Heinzelmännchen*, whose kindly activity it was supposed to commemorate. Very faintly at first, very delicately, very far away the pattering of tiny footsteps became audible through the woofs and the warp of the music. Nearer they came, and still nearer, and their approach was accompanied by an increasing volume of melody. Now they were close at hand, bent upon a dexterous and capable performance of their labor of love. The melody became more authoritative, became exultant with the pleasure which inheres in honest labor, throbbed with the suggestion of a thousand and one different tasks, thrilled with the supreme and penetrative joy of work well done and of a kindly action unostentatiously performed; and subtly insinuated into the music was a vision of the happiness which would come to the tired worker upon finding at dawn that the work which he had feared, deeming it was too complicated, or too heavy, or too exacting mentally, had been finished miraculously, inexplicably during the benign and gentle night. And having attained the zenith of achievement, the tiny Samaritans folded their knapsacks with the fairy tools, and heaved them to their backs, and departed as silently and as clandestinely as they had come, the tap-tapping of their wee feet, a trifle heavier and more tired than when they came, gradually becoming less distinct and finally fading away.

The illusion had been so vivid as to be almost a vision. Guido sighed deeply, and came back to his environment with a start. These dwarfs and gnomes were the playfellows of his childhood. It was to tales of them that he had listened in silent rapture at twilight throughout those long, weary, bed-ridden years that lay behind him. And it seemed to him that never before had he caught the underlying meaning, the subtlety of thought which had externalized itself in the tales revolving about the *Heinzelmännchen*. Did the tradition not convey the lesson that work, courageously attacked, be it ever so difficult, will, when half-done, become comparatively easy of accomplishment? Did it not teach the beauty of fearlessness, the necessity of a stout heart in meeting and dealing with the every-day tasks of life? Did it not hint at the beauty which suffuses the commonplace, if we can but find it?

This sort of thing—delicacy in sentiment wedded to

subtlety in truth—was the sort of thing which the Germany of yore had been famous for, for which it had been beloved by all the world—beloved, applauded and honored. And now!

The pain which swept through him was insufferable. Nostalgia lacerated him. That, which in happier days, he had been pleased to call his "German mood" was fastening itself upon him with hooks of steel. Try as he would he could not resist or shake off the "Germanic" sensation which was enmeshing him. It crept upon him from the ground; it snatched at him with shadowy fingers out of the air; it wafted down upon him from the lofty tree-tops like a benediction. His brain was swathed in fire and ice. In one epochal moment he seemed to envisage all things that he loved which had come out of Germany—Wagnerian operas, Beethoven's symphonies, the romantic songs of Schumann, the sweet sentiment of Mendelssohn, the exquisite fantasies of Mozart, and most of all, best of all, those masterpieces of German literature which were part and parcel of his soul quite as much as certain masterpieces in English.

He had a curious sense of undergoing a transmutation. His knowledge of English and of Russian seemed to be wiped away, so that there remained upon the tablets of his mind nothing but a knowledge of German—nothing but what was essentially German—German tradition, German words, German customs, German language.

He could not—for the world of him—have uttered a sentence, a phrase, or even a word in English. English, and Russian, too, eluded him. He babbled incoherent German phrases, some of them apposite, some of them wholly irrelevant.

"*Deutscher Tannenwald*," he said, and "*Harfenspiel und Glockenklang*," and quite suddenly he burst into the opening lines of Klopstock's "Messias," beautiful as cloth of gold, rich as Bayeux tapestry, exquisitely sonorous as the voice of the French horn wedded to the tones of an organ.

*Sing, unsterbliche Seele, der suendigen Menschen Erloesung,
Die der Messias auf Erden in seiner Menschheit vollendet,
Und durch die er Adams Geschlecht zu der Liebe der
Gottheit,
Leidend, getoetet und verherrlichtet, wieder erhoecht hat!*

He recited the entire opening passage, recited it aloud, and it soothed him immeasurably. Surely, surely, the nation that had brought forth such epics as these could not have abandoned itself wholly to evil even in this hour of madness that had fallen.

Having finished his recitation, he sat in meditations so deep that he could not have plucked forth a single one of them and brought it into the broad glare of conscious thought. Yet he meditated to some purpose, for suddenly, out of the chaos of feeling and thought in which he had been moving phantom-wise, conscious thought emerged.

"Of course," he said, "of course, it's quite plain. To fight against Germany is really to fight for her. The Allies are fighting not only for themselves, but for all humanity—that is generally understood. In that general sense they are fighting for the Germans. In a more particular sense they are fighting Germany's fight. They are fighting to restore Germany to reason. Germany is suffering from a terrible attack of dissociated personality. There is more than one soul in every human being. Personalities have been known to break up into two, three, four component personalities, one of which is usually a pernicious factor and on mischief bent. Precisely this is Germany's plight at the present time. She is mentally diseased. She has saturated herself with envy, and hatred, and the doctrine of *Schrecklichkeit* in war. Therefore it has happened that that part of her personality which is wholesome and kind has become displaced, while her baser part has assumed the upper hand. Mr. Hyde is in the ascendant. Dr. Jekyll is crowded to the wall.

"And so," he concluded, "to fight Germany does not imply hatred of Germany. That's what the *Achtundvierziger* and their descendants with the exception of a few backsliders, understand. That is what the average German and German-American cannot understand, because racial antipathies and racial solidarity have produced in them this sinister displacement of personality.

"It is all very plain."

And then he wondered whether all this was as plain to Grossvater Geddes as it was to himself, for the old man's veering away from the language which he had spoken all

the days of his life was passing strange. Never again would he, Guido, and Janet sing, "O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum," to please Grossvater Geddes as they had sung it barely a year ago on coming home from this very spot.

Guido returned to "Waldheim" in a strangely uplifted frame of mind. He had a long talk with his mother that evening, in which he implored her to allow him to fly for France. She reminded him of his promise not to broach the subject for the present. He told her, in the words of a penmanship sentence, which happened to come into his mind, that "a bad promise is better broken than performed." Frau Ursula became greatly excited. Guido likewise. He cursed his folly in having given her his promise. But he had given it, and he lacked the courage to take the advice of the sentence which he himself had cited.

CHAPTER VI

GUIDO and Frau Ursula returned to Anasquoit together with the Geddes family only a few days before the opening of college. It was while Guido was unpacking his trunk on the evening of his arrival that Frau Ursula came excitedly into his room.

"Guido," she said, in a hurried, flurried voice, "Otto is in the parlor."

"Otto!" Guido exclaimed, incredulously.

"Yes, he's just back from Europe. You'll see him, won't you?"

"Of course I'll see him," said Guido, and ran rather than walked into the parlor, where he found Otto standing at the window and staring out into the street.

Cruel suspicions, insulting insinuations, gross invective were forgotten in the joy of that meeting. They interlocked hands without saying a word.

"Guido," Otto said at last, "I've got a lot to say to you before going back to Europe."

"You're going back? You're not going on with your college course?"

"That will have to wait. I'm going back to fight. I'm going to fight like hell. I'm going back to fight for the Allies, more particularly for France and most intimately, most especially for Belgium."

Guido stared at Otto in blank amazement.

"Take me to your room," Otto commanded. "I've got things to tell you which your mother must not hear."

Guido led the way to his room and Otto, after entering, closed the door with an emphatic bang.

"You're surprised, I suppose, at what I told you just now," he said, eyeing Guido almost truculently, as if expecting some ungenerous comment.

"I am surprised, naturally," Guido retorted.

"Well, if you'd been in my shoes—but I'll begin at the beginning."

It was a long story that Otto had to tell. Guido had been right in his supposition that Otto's acceptance of the position as engineer's assistant had been based on the hope that he would be able to help the Germans after getting into France and Belgium. Guido had not been right in attributing to Otto an intention to enter the German Secret Service. Apparently that form of usefulness for furthering the German cause had not even occurred to him. It had been his intention, he said, to place himself at the disposition of the German Commandant of the first getatable place for the purpose of having work of any sort for which he was fitted, allotted to him. He paused, and Guido asked:

"And you never carried out your intention?"

"No, thank God! My eyes were opened in time, Otto exclaimed, fervently. Before going on to Belgium Otto and his principal had remained in Paris for a week, and it was here that Otto's faith in the German Cause had been rudely shaken for the first time. He had heard things—things that he didn't want to believe. But there was evidence to hand everywhere. Still, for a few days he maintained his stubborn belief in his own race. Then, one evening, in going home from office headquarters where he was engaged in making blue prints, he had stopped to look at a display of books in a shop window. The crumpled pages of what appeared to be an ordinary copy-book, of small format, attracted his attention. His curiosity turned to amazement on perceiving that the entries were written in German. He was able to decipher only a few words from where he stood, owing to the faintness of the writing and the distance at which the diary lay, but those few words sufficed to send him hurrying into the shop, an entreaty to the shopkeeper on his lips to be permitted to see the German Diary close at hand.

"*Mais, oui, Monsieur,*" the shopkeeper replied, and went to fetch the book. Returning with it, he told Otto that a young cousin had found the book on the body of a dead German, and had sent it home as a trophy. That had been months ago, in the early days of the War. No particular value had been attributed to the diary. Hundreds of just such had been found and turned over to the War Office. This particular one was quite brief, as *Monsieur* could see

for himself. But if *Monsieur* was interested and could read German, he was very welcome to examine the diary at leisure. Perhaps *Monsieur* would be good enough to translate such entries as were of interest. Knowing no one who commanded the language of the Boches, and not being overburdened with curiosity, the diary's secrets, until now, had not been wrested from it.

Monsieur was interested, more terribly, horribly interested than the good-natured little *bourgeois* could have comprehended. Also he promised to translate the diary as soon as he had read it himself, being told in return he was "*très-aimable*." But the translating had not been an easy matter. Oh, the writing had been plain and fair enough, too plain and too fair for its hideous import. The writer had been a lad of twenty years from some decent, God-fearing home in Prussia—yes, there still were God-fearing, decent people in Prussia—and he had been horrified and outraged by the brutalities which they had been ordered to commit, and upon which the beastiality of individuals had embroidered especial themes of its own.

"Rape?" Guido demanded.

"Rape, of course. That's the merest commonplace of this war. Perhaps of all wars." Well, rape was bad enough—was, of course, in a way the worst of all crimes perpetrated in war-time, with the ensuing horror which, conceivably, might perpetuate itself indefinitely until the end of time, vitiating the blood that flowed in the invaded race's veins, and setting a hideous stain upon the purity of the family and racial strains. But the brute who committed rape had at least the motive of an all-powerful natural appetite to plead in extenuation of his foul crime. But when foulness was committed for the sake of foulness, when filth became an end in itself—

"What in heaven's name do you mean?" Guido demanded.

What did Otto mean? He seemed unable to find words in which to clothe the disgusting things which he desired to impart. It became apparent that he wished to hint at them rather than to describe them. He assured Guido that, upon essaying the translation, he had been so overcome with shame—just pure human shame as opposed to racial

shame—that he had stumbled over the text like a chidden school-boy.

"But what——" Guido demanded again.

"Well," Otto began to stammer. His cheeks flushed. Desecration of tombs, of family vaults which had been opened up by shells. How desecration? Well, that was just it. Churches—sacred vessels had been treated in the same way. Filth. Obscenities. One couldn't put the thing into words. Yes, the worst that the imagination could conceive.

"And that," Otto concluded, "is being done by the race from which you and I spring."

"But not all," Guido interposed feebly, "surely not all of them."

"No, not all of them." Otto thanked God for it. The writers of many of the diaries which had been collected by the French War Office, like the writer of the diary which he, Otto, had examined, professed disgust and horror at the conduct of their comrades.

There was, Otto said, something hauntingly horrible in the accusation hurled against his own race by the dead German lad, from Prussia, whose diary he had handled. It gripped one. It had gripped him, Otto, horribly. He had felt a sense of comradeship, or nearness to that Prussian who was dead, whom he had never seen, of whose very existence he had not known until he had stumbled upon his diary, such as he had never felt before for any human creature. He felt that death had been kind to that young Prussian in hunting him down. Horror a man might forget, but shame, such as that boy had experienced in witnessing the *débâcle*—never.

"Still, one must not condemn the entire race," Guido interposed, feebly. It did not occur to either of the two boys that they had exchanged parts. Guido was now defending, Otto arraigning the Germans.

"Wait," said Otto. "You yet have to hear the worst. Belgium!"

He shot that one word at Guido with a spasmodic effort.

"Belgium!" he shouted again. "Belgium! I've been in Belgium!"

Guido said nothing. Apparently there was nothing to say. His amazement at seeing Otto thus transformed was

already a thing of the past. He had accepted the situation completely and at once. But he felt chill with apprehension as he waited for Otto's further disclosures.

"Viscount Bryce knew what he was about when he sent in his report," Otto said, bluntly. "We read the charges here. We criticised them. We pulled the report to pieces and commented upon this point or that. We said, 'This doesn't sound very forceful,' or 'This doesn't seem so very bad.' Or 'We don't believe this *can* be true.' I know—because I was one of the people who said those very things. We, here in America, analyzed Bryce's report quite cold-bloodedly, as if it were a piece of dramatic writing which didn't have the agony piled on thick enough in some spots and too thick in others. We denied the more heart-rending points, and smoothed over the less cruel ones. Less cruel! Now that I've been in Belgium it seems to me that not one single point can be said to be less cruel than the other. Oh, horrible, horrible, thrice horrible!"

Curious anomaly! Otto was talking German all the time, for into German he invariably lapsed, as we know, when sore beset or wrought upon. Thus was the desire experienced by Guido in the early days of the War fulfilled—his desire to hear Otto, whose English was spineless and colorless as compared with his German, who loved the German tongue so passionately that he read even the English classics in German, denounce Germany in forceful, scathing German which no native could have bettered.

"Just what——" Guido demanded, feeling that Otto had told only part, only the smallest and feeblest part of his experience in Belgium.

"Just what? Ask rather, 'What not?' I tell you, Guido, all of Bryce's charges are true. All of them." It seems that in an official exhibit at the French War Office Otto had seen a letter written home by a German officer which he had not had time to mail before being killed. The letter had recounted how—with reluctance, so the diarist said—aged people had been driven into the middle of the village street and had been manacled and tied to chairs in order to get the French to cease firing from the houses which the French still occupied, while the Germans marched through the town. The ruse had been successful. The

French saw that they could not shoot at the enemy without hitting their own people, and the firing stopped.

"Horrible," said Guido.

Otto continued his recital. The mowing down of civilians by machine guns for some fancied wrong or insult offered the German soldiers, the barbarous treatment of prisoners of war, the unbelievable condition of the German prison camps, the obscenities to which the prisoners of war were subjected by the civilians of small villages through which they passed en route, the deportation of young girls—all was true, only too terribly, frightfully true.

There were, incredible though it seems, atrocities the story of which had not penetrated to this side of the water. Atrocities, Otto made haste to explain, for which the German Military Authorities were directly responsible. For here was a curious thing; in the average war the individual is worse than the authorities, and the authorities curb and check and restrain the viciousness of the individual. But in the German Army the reverse is true. In the German Army—Otto broke off abruptly.

"Go on," Guido besought him.

"In the German Army, bad as the worst individual may be, in the German Army that fetich which the German calls Authority is infinitely worse. Is infinitely, incomparably, unbelievably more evil than the lowest individual."

He paused again, but resumed almost directly, speaking now with a terrible, direct intentness.

"You know how everything in Germany is *verstaatlicht*—railroads, old-age pensions, insurance, banks, everything, in brief, of any account. Well, in their craze to *verstaatlich* things, to organize and to place at the disposition of the state, they have even *verstaatlicht* lust."

"I am afraid I do not understand," murmured Guido.

"How could you? How should you? You and I have been brought up according to former German ideas." Then, abruptly, irrelevantly Otto demanded:

"Has Egon von Dammer favored you with his notions on the necessity of immorality?"

Guido nodded.

"Well, Egon's notions are shared by the German Military Authorities. They think the indulgence of lust is a physical necessity, just as the invasion of Belgium was a military

necessity. It's horrible merely to think about. We wouldn't discuss the things before a woman. And over there, in Belgium—God pity them!—the women had got to endure the thing our women cannot even endure to hear spoken of."

He rose in irrepressible excitement and came and stood before Guido.

"It was that—" he shouted, "it was that made me come back home so I could go up into Canada to enlist."

"You haven't told me yet," Guido interposed, weakly.

Otto's face went white with emotion as he told his friend of the ultimate and final violation of human decency of which Germany had been guilty. The German Military Authorities, fearing for the health of their troops, had decided to requisition so and so many Belgian women for each company of men. "Not prostitutes, you understand, such as Lord Roberts requisitioned for the entertainment of his men at the end of his successful Indian campaign, but decent women and girls—girls like Elschen and Janet, women like your mother and mine."

Guido felt shaken and faint. All he could say was "It's horrible—it's horrible."

"It's damnable," said Otto. "And that is why I am going to fight for the Allies."

"But, Otto," Guido protested, "other armies of invasion——"

"What other armies of invasion have done or will do does not concern this generation," Otto shouted, angrily. "This generation must bear its own burdens. This generation must deal with the malefactors of its own era. This generation must stamp out the iniquity which arises in its midst. Not to do so is to connive at iniquity. Not to do so is to hand over to generations yet unborn the unholy fruits of the powers of darkness. Not to do so is to incur the penalty of being cursed by future generations as a generation of vipers and weaklings."

"And England? Do you still believe that England caused the War?"

"I don't know and I don't care who caused the War or what caused the War," Otto replied, still fortissimo, "although I am now inclined to disbelieve everything the Germans claim. But even if England did cause the War,

as I used to believe, it cannot by one jot or tittle change my profound conviction that Germany must be defeated, and not merely defeated but humbled and brought low. A nation that so misuses the strength and the ability and the power with which God has dowered it does not deserve to continue to flourish. It must be taught a lesson which it will never forget."

"Surely, you do not mean that Germany should be dismembered, as you used to think that the Allies had agreed in secret treaty to do?"

"I'm not so certain about that treaty as I used to be," Otto replied. "You know the Allies claim it was made for protective purposes only. They say they knew Germany at first hand. Enough said."

Otto broke off, and resumed walking the floor.

"I can tell you, Guido," he said, "there is only one way for those of German blood who are guiltless to prove their innocence, and that is to go and fight Germany. And that is what I am going to do."

"How do your parents take this?"

Otto halted in his travels about the room, and leaned his elbow upon the mantel before replying.

"Mother is heart-broken, father is furious. Both refuse to believe what I tell them. They do not realize that I got all my facts at first hand. Elschen, too, rejects my story as a wicked slander." Otto paused a moment, his lip trembled. The tragic look in the honest, fearless blue eyes, the curious tremor which had quavered through his voice as he mentioned Elschen's name forbade interrogation or comment.

Guido's eyes looked the sympathy which he lacked the courage to voice. Had Otto proposed to Elschen only to be rejected? Would he have had a chance with her if, instead of embracing the cause of the Allies, he had remained pro-German? Guido did not think so. Elschen's manner toward Otto had always been the last word in complacency and sisterliness. At any rate, it was idle to speculate on all this now. Otto, it was plain to see, was wounded to the quick, but Guido knew Otto too well not to comprehend that no woman would ever have power to sway Otto by one jot or tittle in a matter of moral conviction.

Otto continued.

"Well, can I blame my parents and Elschen? Didn't I refuse to accept testimony as unimpeachable?—I mean Bryce's report. For you were right in contending that there are some few statesmen of so high a character that their word is their bond. The pity of it is—" he interrupted himself bitterly, "that Germany has none such—nor ever had. Bismarck! I used to admire him. I know better now."

"Your parents ought to believe you," said Guido. "They know how violently anti-Ally you were. Surely they must realize that you would not have changed excepting for good and sufficient reasons."

"Faith, if faith is faith, is the most resilient and tenacious thing in the world," said Otto, quietly. "I remember how I felt before I went into France and Belgium and saw. It took the evidence of my own eyes to convert me. It's like this, Guido. Supposing somebody, no matter how good and great, came along and told me you had done something wicked and low. I wouldn't believe it. This does not necessarily mean that I would believe the hypothetical person was telling me an untruth. It merely means that my faith in you is so great that I would fabricate all sorts of improbabilities—mistakes, misinformation, even a clouded mind—sooner than part with my faith in you."

"Since returning home, Germans on this side of the water have tried to make me disbelieve the evidence of my own eyes. 'It cannot be,' they say. 'You do not know the meaning of German discipline.' As a matter of fact, I do know the meaning of German discipline—I know it overwhelmingly. It is just that—German discipline, that is responsible for all this sort of thing. The German soldier has been overdisciplined, overdisciplined in a way no other soldier, I believe, would allow himself to be overdisciplined, with kicks and cuffs and curses. Discipline has become more than second nature to him, it has undermined and absorbed and superseded every other quality, both mental and moral, while he is in uniform. And that is the reason why this incomprehensible thing has happened, why men whose nature is essentially kind and honest have consented to play the part of dastards. There are exceptions, of course. One regiment, composed principally of married

men, overcome with pity for the starving Belgian babies, asked permission to hand over their condensed milk to the Belgian mothers. The request was granted by their commanding officer."

"I do not think you go far enough in fixing the blame," said Guido. "There is something baffling about the psychology of a nation, not intrinsically ignoble, that can come to this moral pass." He paused, and then said, abruptly:

"Otto, will you answer me a question? How did you originally come to believe that the Allies intended dismembering Germany? And that Germany had gone to war to defend herself?"

"I cannot tell you," said Otto, reddening. "I think my faith in Germany made me blind to everything else. It drove me almost mad to see Germany maligned on all sides. So I was predisposed to believe everything bad about the Allies, because I believed that nations and peoples capable of so perjuring themselves were capable of every infamy. I am not certain that this is a correct analysis of what I formerly felt and thought, but I think it is pretty nearly right."

They parted half an hour before midnight. Otto had taken his leave of his parents, a heart-rending leave, with his father in a Berserker rage and his mother divided between fear of her husband, love of her boy, and faith in her own people. Otto intended going right up to Canada. He thought he might pass muster as a Canadian. He knew that what with his German accent and his German physiognomy no British sergeant would have allowed him to enlist.

Otto's dramatic conversion and the knight-errantry he displayed renewed Guido's wish to enter the French air service. In spite of his promise he again broached the subject to his mother. Spirited words passed between them. For days the atmosphere was one of gloom. Frau Ursula finally appealed to Dr. Koenig and to Professor Geddies, and the three between them forced Guido back into apparent compliance with the neutrality which America will chose to maintain.

But the War troubled him, troubled him as never before. Otto had given him many intimate glimpses of contemporary France and Belgium which had visualized for

Guido, as only a word of mouth report can, the horror of all that was transpiring.

He suffered a good deal from insomnia, and at Dr. Koenig's suggestion, resumed his two-mile walks before retiring.

Since Anasquoit was limited in area, these nocturnal strolls took him to all parts of the town, and one evening, on the lower part of Main Street, he was accosted by a very attractive girl. He did not understand at once, and asked her to repeat her question. The girl looked at him oddly, and then demanded:

"Say, where were you born, anyhow?"

Then he understood. Without answering her, he brushed past her, his heart beating with indignation, his face hot with vicarious shame. A few evenings later he met her again. She did not stop him this time, but came and walked alongside of him.

"Well, blokey," she said, in the tone of an old friend, "has it struck you yet what I asked you the other evening?"

Guido halted abruptly, and faced the girl.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," he said, angrily; "a fine-looking girl like you."

She interrupted him with ribald laughter.

"Good looks are the chief assets in our perfesh," she said.

"Why don't you turn over a new leaf?" Guido demanded.

"You could easily make an honest living."

"I could, could I?" she quizzed him. Then, truculently: "Want to support me?"

"Hardly."

"There you are."

"I'm willing, though, to make this bargain with you," Guido said, impulsively. "I'll try and find you an honest job—a job that pays enough to keep you decently. And until I find you such a position I will give you enough money to live on, say ten dollars a week. But you have got to play fair."

"Say," the girl demanded, now frankly amused, "are you crippled under the hat? See me working? Nix."

Without replying, Guido left the girl, and walked rapidly away.

The episode made a deep impression upon him. He had,

as we know, in his heart blamed Frau Ursula for her vigorous denunciation of every woman who had been lured from the narrow path. He now felt inclined to agree with her. Experience is life's finest school-master, and therein lies the great danger of a circumscribed experience. It was well for the rounding out of his character that he met with another experience of a similar nature soon after, which was destined to end quite differently.

The girl who accosted him on this occasion was slight and fragile, and as he involuntarily glanced at her, he saw a white and frightened-looking face. Although he had avowed never again to hold parley with a woman of questionable character, something in the expression of the childish face caused him to ask abruptly:

"Why do you live this sort of a life?"

The girl reddened and the tears came to her eyes. She did not reply, and Guido repeated his question.

"I'd be only too glad to get away from it," she said, in a low, frightened voice, and Guido noticed that before speaking she turned and looked to all sides, as if fearing that some hostile eavesdropper was secreted in the incorporeal air.

"Then why not do so?"

She did not reply, and Guido began to ply her with questions. Was she really willing to make a fresh start? Was she sincere in expressing the wish to do so? Would she do the square thing if he helped her to find a job and paid for her maintenance in the meantime?"

The girl seemed tongue-tied, for she replied to none of these questions, but there was now in her eyes a look of mingled terror and hope.

"What are you afraid of?" Guido questioned her, with the utmost gentleness. "You have already lost that which the average woman considers her most treasured possession. But, by a sincere effort, with someone to help you, there is no reason in the world why you should not regain your footing. You have, then, everything to hope for and nothing to fear. Why are you so desperately frightened? Why are you afraid to speak up?"

"Oh, sir, you cannot understand, indeed you cannot," the girl replied, a dry sob in her throat. "I'm made to do this."

"By whom?" Guido demanded.

"By him—by my husband."

Guido's thoughts harked back to Erna Gottschalk. Good Lord! Was this girl, with her flower-like face and her soft, well-bred voice, her respectable, gentlewomanly demeanor only another adventuress of the Erna type? The boy's lips curled disdainfully. The suspicion flashed through his mind that the other girl, the girl who had addressed him as "Blokey" the week before had perhaps engineered this little comedy.

His impulse was to turn and walk away. But he had an enthusiasm for humanity which nothing could down. He wanted to believe the best of everyone, not the worst. Also he was young and the girl was pretty, and loveliness the world over proves a magic key into hearts made of much sterner stuff than young Mr. von Estritz's.

After a brief pause, he said:

"Your husband, you say, forces you to lead this life?"

The girl suddenly recovered the use of her tongue.

"He's not really my husband," she said. "I thought he was, sir, when I first lived with him. I'm a Delaware girl, and I lived on a farm all my life until a few months ago. He boarded with us for two weeks last summer. Then he asked me to marry him. My parents and I thought him just fine, and father gave his consent to the engagement. He came down to see us Christmas, and we planned for marriage in spring. The day for the wedding was set. Then he telegraphed that he could not come on—his firm was sending him on an important Western tour and there was not an hour to lose. I was to come down to New York to get married—he'd meet me at the railroad station in Anasquoit. Well—I came on, my parents knowing all about it. He told me he had our little home all ready and he hoped I'd like it. It was a modest little place he took me to, but it was cheerful and clean. There he told me he didn't believe in religious marriages—which I knew—and he didn't like a civil marriage before a Justice of the Peace. He thought marriage was too sacred to be made a thing of traffic and contract, like any other partnership. Those were his very words, sir. Well, I thought him sincere, and when he brought in two witnesses, friends of his, and he signed a paper and I signed it and his friends

signed it, I thought I was legally married. I truly did. You see, I'd heard there was such a thing as a common law marriage."

"I believe you," said Guido. "Go on."

"Well, I soon enough found out I was mistaken," the girl went on. "Oh, I cannot tell you particulars. He—just—forced me—to this."

"Well," said Guido, with all the indignant decisiveness of untried youth, "you've just got to get away from it."

"It's no use," said the girl. "He'll track me down. I tried twice before to get away. And he always found me—and beat me up most horribly."

"Well, he is not going to get you back this time," said Guido. "Look here, how much did you expect to earn this evening?"

"Ten dollars, perhaps fifteen."

"Well, I am going to give you twenty dollars," said Guido, pulling a roll of bills from his pocket, "and I want you to go home. And to-morrow morning you'll meet me. Now, where can we meet?"

"I won't take the money," the girl retorted, vehemently; "he'd only take it from me and send me out again."

Guido had thrust the bills into her hand, but she opened her hand and dropped the money."

"You must take it," said Guido.

"I won't," cried the girl. "I can't." She made as if to run away, and Guido caught her by the wrist. At this moment a burly policeman hove into sight, and approaching Guido, demanded:

"This girl been bothering you, sir?"

"No, no," said Guido, thinking the lie a holy one.

"He been bothering you?" the policeman now demanded of the girl.

"Oh, no, indeed, no," the girl cried. The policeman looked uncertainly from one to the other. Catching sight of the bills on the sidewalk, he stooped and picked them up.

"These belong to you?" he asked gruffly, eyeing Guido suspiciously.

Guido accepted the money, adroitly peeling one bill from the rest as he took the roll from the policeman's hand.

"Good-night, officer," he said.

"Good-night, sir," said the policeman, and walked away, jauntily swinging his stick.

"We cannot stand here and talk, that is certain," said Guido, and stepping to the curb, he hailed an empty jitney that was passing. The jitney-driver called out to him that he was homeward bound, and could take on no more fares. Guido shouted back that he was very anxious to have a car to himself. Thereupon the man stopped the car and the bargain was quickly made.

Guido helped the girl into the jitney, which, as it happened, was a closed one.

"Where to?" the man asked.

"Just drive on, and I'll tell you where to when we get to the end of this one-horse town," said Guido, purposely flippant. The man grinned, said "Right-O," and they were off.

"Where are we going?" the girl asked.

"I haven't the slightest idea. If I take you over to New York, could you go to the Y. W. C. A. for the night?"

"Oh, sir, I'm not fit to go there," the girl replied, and although Guido expostulated with her for fully five minutes, she absolutely refused to present herself at the doors of the Y. W. C. A.

"You don't know what it feels like to be like me," she said. "Indeed, you don't."

"Well, you are not going to feel that way much longer," Guido retorted, grimly.

They had reached the end of the town by this time, and the man, grinning, asked Guido where he wanted to go.

"Take us over to New York," said Guido.

"Charge you extra," said the man.

"Charge what you want," said Guido, "but take us over to New York."

"So," said Guido, as the car drove into the ferry-boat pier, "that will throw your 'husband' off the scent."

"Yes, but what——" the girl asked, weakly.

"You'll have to go to some hotel for the night."

"How can I?" the girl replied. "I have no luggage. Not even a grip. No decent hotel would take me in."

Guido saw the justice of this. After considerable thought and talk, he decided to take the girl to one of the large railroad depots, where she would be secure for the

night. He dismissed the jitney at the ferry, preferring that the man should not be a witness to the girl's destination.

He left her in the Railroad Station, at the door of the Ladies' Waiting Room, which was well equipped with comfortable chairs. Guido suggested the advisability of making some purchases of underwear in the morning and a valise to put them in. Thus equipped she would have no difficulty in finding a boarding place. She seemed disinclined to accept the money which he pressed on her, but finally allowed him to slip it into her reticule.

Guido questioned her as to the nature of work she was capable of doing.

"Would you mind living out?" he asked.

"I would like nothing better," the girl replied, with genuine warmth. "I love housework. And I am good at it. I'm an excellent cook and a fine laundress."

"My mother is looking for a maid," said Guido.

"Yes, but will she have me when she knows——"

"Oh, I think I can manage that all right," Guido replied, with an assurance he was far from feeling.

It was, of course, entirely natural that Frau Ursula should show the indignation she did when Guido told her of his adventure and of the quasi-promise he had made, which he did the next evening at supper. What, take a street-walker into her house? A girl even lower than the *infame Person*? It was lamentable that Frau Ursula allowed her temper to run away with her to the extent of calling Guido a fool. For who but a fool, after one such experience, would be willing to be made the dupe of another adventurer?

"You forget, my dear Mother," said Guido, coldly, "that it was you, not I, who brought Erna Gottschalk into this house, and it was you also who was her real dupe—not I."

Frau Ursula fairly puffed with wrath at being reminded of this unpleasant truth.

"*Mutterchen*, if you had seen this girl as I saw her——"

"And what does that mean?" Frau Ursula exclaimed, irritably. "I suppose you think her a marvel of loveliness and innocence. Well, my son, the Eyes of Youth and the Eyes of Middle-Age see things differently, so that even if I had seen this prodigy of outraged virtue, or were to see

her, I could not possibly see her as you see her. Therefore to say that 'if I could see her as you saw her' is to postulate an absurdity."

"It was not her prettiness so much as the effect of innocence which she conveyed that I was thinking of when I postulated the absurdity," Guido said, coolly.

"Innocence!" Frau Ursula exclaimed. "Innocence! My dear boy, I can tell you I do not believe you will ever hear from her again. She has your money, and she and her disreputable friend at this moment are probably toasting in champagne the health of rich young fools like yourself."

Guido smiled wanly.

"If things are as you suppose," he said, "there is no use in getting excited about the matter, because it has then disposed of itself. If things are not as you suppose, you might be a good sport, and because my judgment scored on one point, give me the benefit of the doubt on all points and take the girl in."

"You are very clever, Guido," said Frau Ursula, in a tone which implied that cleverness is not always an attribute of unadulterated desirability.

"Well, are you game?" he demanded, in English.

"No, I'm not game," she retorted, also in English, but immediately relapsed into German. "You're a baby, Guido. You do not realize, not in the least, how bad some women are."

"Oh, yes, I realize it."

"I think not. You think Erna Gottschalk a freak, a unique exponent of immorality. That is because you have never encountered any other worthless women, and that is why you persist in thinking this girl innocent."

"What if I have encountered other worthless women?" Guido inquired, calmly. Frau Ursula started.

"Mother," said Guido, gently, "don't let us dwell more than we have to on unpleasant topics. Suffice it to say that your *Herzensjunge* is not longer an infant in arms. He is a young man."

"And the women have found it out," Frau Ursula groaned.

Guido reddened.

"At any rate, *Mutterchen*, it is just because I know how

very, very horrid some women are that I think it a beastly shame and injustice to class a girl who was deceived and lied to, and finally frightened and bullied into a devious life, with the sort of women you have in mind. And I tell you with the utmost frankness that if you will not aid me to help the girl get back, by giving her a trial as a servant, I shall make every effort to find her a position elsewhere. And I'll succeed. And until I succeed, I will pay for her upkeep out of my own pocket."

Frau Ursula expostulated, entreated and implored. Guido received all her frenzied appeals in silence. He said neither yea or nay.

His mute obstinacy made his mother very wroth. She could see from the abstracted look in his eyes that he was revolving in his mind some thought or other which to him seemed worth while, but which he would not allow her to share. She was much aggrieved; she felt it a huge injustice that a recalcitrant child could thus at pleasure be able to draw into his own shell.

If she could have guessed the nature of the thought that was agitating her boy, the injustice of life would have seemed not merely huge but preposterous and monstrous.

For Guido was reflecting upon the bearing of the case of Ella Truesdale upon the case of Hauser versus Hauser. At the very moment when Frau Ursula was beseeching him in tears to desist from his mad enterprise, it had flashed upon him that his mother's categorical attitude in sex morality was at the bottom of her estrangement from her husband.

Guido realized intuitively that a good man—and as such he now considered Hauser—would be far more apt than a woman to forgive and to forget a lapse from morality in a woman, if the circumstances which had led to the lapse yielded extenuation. That being so, he decided on the spur of the moment that he would bend his every effort to persuade Frau Ursula to allow Ella to enter her home. The first concession to broadmindedness made, he felt confident that a study of Ella's character would effect a complete change of viewpoint in Frau Ursula.

Their silent and veiled hostilities continued for two days. Then the letter arrived which Guido was awaiting with such eagerness. Frau Ursula handed it to him without

comment, and Guido, having read it, tossed it carelessly across the table to his mother.

"Read and take note," he said, "that the girl intends to lead an honest life; that she is grateful to me for my aid. Also,"—his voice was humorously ironic—"that she is of a humble frame of mind, for she spells the first person singular of the personal pronoun with a small letter, instead of a capital, an act of voluntary self-abasement which quite takes my breath away."

Frau Ursula glanced sharply at Guido.

"You are beyond me," she said. "Sarcasm. H'm."

"Why am I beyond you?" Guido inquired, subtly amused. "Because I do not fall in love with every pretty face I see?"

"Are you still anxious to have me take her in?"

"I am."

Frau Ursula capitulated, quite unexpectedly.

"Very well," she said, "you may write her to come."

Accordingly Ella Truesdale was installed as maid of all work in the Hauser-von Estritz household.

"She's much too pretty to keep at the drudgery of housework for any length of time," was Frau Ursula's verdict, after having shown the girl to her room. "You'll see her virtuous determination peter out in a week or two."

Guido offered no denial. He felt certain that Ella's character was good and that her conduct would refute his mother's specious logic. He had, as has been pointed out before, a prodigious faith in human nature.

It was certainly not to Frau Ursula's credit that her little maid's determination to lead a virtuous life did not peter out in the first fortnight, as her mistress had predicted. Intentionally or unintentionally, Frau Ursula laid a greater burden upon the frail shoulders of the new maid than she had ever before seen fit to put upon any servant. She gave her hasty, and—truth to tell—arrogantly worded orders. She did not trouble to make these orders particularly plain. She gave her a written memorandum of the three meals a day for a full week, never troubling to ask the girl whether she knew how to cook all the dishes included in the menus or not. And she laid out more work for her than any one woman could accomplish in a day. Perhaps she hoped to discourage the girl from stay-

ing. Perhaps, also, she was quite unconscious of the injustice with which she was treating the girl.

Guido, of course, was in ignorance of his mother's tactics. He noticed, it is true, that the new maid pothered about the kitchen long after ten o'clock on the first four evenings which she spent under his mother's roof, and looked woefully tired and fagged mornings. But she was up betimes and the breakfast was ready to the minute.

On the fifth evening, about nine o'clock, Frau Ursula rose abruptly and went to the kitchen. A spirited dialogue ensued, and Guido wondered what was happening. When Frau Ursula came back into the room, she said:

"That foolish child seems to think she was to carry out all my orders the very first week. There was a lot of house-cleaning to be done—kitchen closets, that sort of thing. I meant, of course, for her to do it gradually, but she's gone right ahead without resting a minute all day. I told her that that won't do. That won't do at all."

She looked a little ashamed, and Guido had a momentary glimpse of an ulterior psychology too unpleasant to be seriously attributed to his mother.

"I've sent her to bed," Frau Ursula concluded, "and told her to do nothing but what is absolutely necessary tomorrow—just the cooking and dishwashing and dusting. She's entirely played out."

"Is she satisfactory?" Guido inquired, solicitously.

"So far, entirely," said Frau Ursula, shortly.

From that day on Frau Ursula showed Ella the same consideration she had shown her predecessors. But she trusted her new maid as little as before, and waited eagerly for the lapse from virtue to occur, which, if her own theory was correct, as of course it was, was bound to happen sooner or later. She entertained a profound conviction, that on her first "going-out day," Ella would "stay out all night." What then was her amazement when Ella, when Sunday came, announced that she was not going out, but would sit and read and sew in her own room. And would Mrs. Hauser please to call her in case she wanted anything.

"Now what's the meaning of all that?" Frau Ursula demanded of Guido, after Ella had left the room.

"She probably prefers to read a good book to gadding about and gossiping," said Guido. "Sensible girl."

"A good book," snorted Frau Ursula. "What do you call a good book?"

"I? Oh, Stevenson's 'Virginibus Puerisque,' and Thoreau's 'Walden,' and Henry James's 'The Portrait of a Lady.'"

"Guido! You are not seriously suggesting that you think she reads Stevenson or Thoreau or Henry James."

"Of course not. You asked for *my* preferences. As to hers—why not ask her?"

"Guido! You are impertinent. *Manchmal bist Du geradesu frech.*"

"Mother!" Guido sprang from his chair, and dropping upon his knees, encircled Frau Ursula's waist with his arms. "There, there—did I hurt her little feelings? Won't she forgive me?"

"You hurt my feelings quite frequently of late, Guido," said Frau Ursula, with great dignity.

"I don't mean to. Mother, don't let's quarrel about a stranger. It is not worth while."

This show of indifference for Ella put Frau Ursula into the best possible of moods, and our youthful hero, before returning to his novel, reflected that there is in every woman something of the child-soul.

A few evenings later Ella's diffidence in the matter of "going out" was unexpectedly explained. Frau Ursula, coming home a little earlier than usual, asked her maid to go to the store for her to make some trifling purchase. To her surprise, the girl burst into tears.

"I don't know what you will think of me," she said, "but, oh! I am so terribly afraid he will get hold of me again if I go out alone."

"But it is quite light still," said Frau Ursula.

"Daylight or darkness, I'm afraid. You don't know what a hell my life was before you took pity on me. Oh, please, please, do not send me out."

"Of course you sha'n't go," said Frau Ursula, quickly adding: "Was that the reason you did not go out on Sunday?"

"Yes'm."

"Your health will suffer."

"Oh, no. I get all the exercise I need in-doors—and I have all windows open while I sweep and dust."

Frau Ursula was shocked. She was horribly shocked. She went immediately to Guido's room and reported the conversation.

"You were right and I was wrong," she said. "The girl is absolutely respectable. Well, one is never too old to learn. Poor child. Poor child." And after that she never wavered in her kindness to Ella. She took her to the moving pictures once a week, and, whenever she went for a walk in the evening, bade the girl accompany her. In addition she made Ella frequent little gifts of the sort dear to a young girl's heart—candy, ribbon, gloves and similar finery.

Guido wondered in the days that followed whether it never occurred to his mother to apply the case of Ella as a corrective to her interpretation of Hauser's attitude and Hauser's suspicion, or whether Ella and all she represented remained a mere extraneous adventure, a mere excrescence of experience, a mere adjunct, not vital to or interlaced with life itself.

Frau Ursula reverted to Ella's past repeatedly.

"Such a nice girl," she said one day. "I cannot comprehend how such a thing came to happen to her. I've always thought a woman must be to blame in some way." And a few days later she remarked: "I am sincerely sorry for the girl." After another week had elapsed, she indulged in the comment: "I really believe she told you the unequivocal truth. I don't believe she was to blame at all."

Guido, with a coolness which would have enraged Frau Ursula had she suspected it, for temperateness in judgment almost all women hold to be the parallel of temperateness in affection, juxtaposed these three comments and discovered in them a distinct progression in the right direction. His mother's primary emotion had been perplexity, that a girl possessing such admirable traits should have gone wrong. Perplexity was succeeded by compassion; and compassion in turn had yielded to a sentiment closely akin to respect: "I don't believe she was to blame at all!"

Guido congratulated himself upon his prescience, wondering how long it would take for Frau Ursula's conversion to seep into her soul, and to bring about a regeneration of her attitude toward Hauser.

Frau Ursula, meanwhile, was congratulating herself upon the happy chance—as such she chose now to consider Guido's adventure—which had thrown such a "pearl" of a servant into her path. In view of Ella's timidity, it was reasonable to suppose that she would remain with Frau Ursula indefinitely, and Guido, with an amusement in which there was nothing unkind, beheld his mother, in speaking of Ella, unconsciously assume the manner which the owner of a chattel might justifiably have employed.

It never occurred either to Frau Ursula or to Guido that this Arcadian condition of affairs might culminate in a perfectly natural way. Ella, it is true, did not go to the stores, but the stores came to her in the person of a butcher-boy whose juvenility rendered him quite innocuous, and furthermore in the shape of a stout and not handsome grocer's assistant who had reached the years of indiscretion which are euphemistically termed the reverse.

To this stalwart grocer's assistant, Ella announced one day, she had engaged herself. The marriage was to take place two months hence. The bridegroom had saved up enough money to start a little store of his own, which he purposed to do in his home-town, a little village up-state.

"But——" said Frau Ursula, when Ella announced her engagement, and curtailed her protest. Thus far had she progressed on the road up which Guido had headed her.

"I've told him, Ma'am, I've told him all about it," said Ella, divining the nature of Frau Ursula's objection. Meekness and defiance were curiously blended in her voice. "He says it doesn't matter. He says it wasn't my fault. And even if it had been, he says many a good girl has gone wrong and come out right in the end."

Then Frau Ursula surprised herself and her maid by saying very emphatically:

"He is perfectly right in saying that, my dear. I am convinced that no man could get a better wife than you will make."

When Guido, a little later congratulated Ella, Ella pulled a book out from beneath her apron.

"If you please, Mr. von Estritz," she said, Toni says you must be a saint to have behaved the way you did. And he says, if you don't mind, he would like you to accept this book from him and read it when you have a chance. He

says you've the makings in you of a good socialist. Though you are a rich young man. If you please, sir, I hope it's all right. I've no idea what it means."

"It's perfectly all right, and I'm exceedingly obliged to Toni," said Guido, who, at this time, had only the vaguest notion of what socialism stands for. "And you tell Toni, with my compliments, that the way he is behaving shows he's a genuine gentleman."

Then, Toni's gift in hand, he made his escape from the kitchen.

The book which Toni had sent him was a copy of Bebel's "Woman," and after supper that evening Guido opened it and glanced at it cursorily, wondering what sort of a book Toni might consider worth reading. He drew his breath sharply as he read the first paragraph upon which his eyes happened to alight, and he sat up all night reading the book with which the green-grocer had presented him. And even as he read he was aware of a dual consciousness—interest in the book and amazement that a man of Toni's class should essay literature of that sort. He had, until that hour, seen nothing commendable in Toni excepting his laudable intention to make Ella his wife in spite of her prenuptial "marriage." He became aware quite suddenly with a shock which he subsequently likened both in degree and kind to the shock which Frau Ursula had sustained upon discovering Ella's fundamental purity, that this ungainly German-American, with hands the size of hams and a bullet-head which promised to refute the scientific doctrine that Nature abhors a vacuum, should have lurking somewhere under his rude exterior ideals and aspirations of his own.

Guido was greatly impressed. More than that. His uncommonly keen moral perceptions had been exercised exclusively so far on matters touching the War. They were now, if not diverted from the War, at least partially withdrawn from that overtopping subject by the perennial issue which concerns the submerged tenth.

Thus was Guido initiated into socialism. Henceforth he had two topics upon which to employ his moral indignation. Along with books and articles on the War, he now sedulously read all socialistic literature that he could lay his hands on. But it would be a mistake to suppose that

he confined his reading exclusively to these two subjects. Moral indignation, to be maintained at fever-point, requires sustenance. Guido read the Bible and the Gospel of Buddha along with his socialistic brochures and war documents.

How this odd assortment of literature was ultimately to align and harmonize itself in his mind, we shall see later on. For the present the critical functions of his mind were almost in abeyance. He absorbed, but did not question the intrinsic truth of what he was reading. His sympathies were enlisted, he was generous to a fault, and compassion and magnanimity inhibited for the present his finer critical sense.

So that Toni's forecast seemed in danger of fulfillment. Guido, in time, promised to become a thoroughgoing socialist.

CHAPTER VII

GUIDO took occasion one evening, shortly after the announcement of Ella's engagement, to sound his mother in regard to Hauser. It was a delicate task. Whenever Guido mentioned her husband's name, Frau Ursula had fallen into the habit of saying, snappishly: "I wish you would not remind me of that man." As if she needed reminding, poor thing! But upon this particular occasion Guido persevered and adroitly turned the conversation into the desired channel. Since she agreed that Toni was behaving very well, why did she deny that Hauser had acted well in marrying a woman whom he had believed culpable? Viewed impartially—without taking into account his blunder in thinking an innocent woman guilty—for a blunder it was and no worse—Hauser had really behaved excellently well.

"Pray, are you comparing me to a servant-girl?" Frau Ursula asked, indignantly.

"No, I am comparing one gentleman to another," said Guido. Then he laughed. But Frau Ursula would not join in his laughter, and to shake the citadel of her gloom he was compelled to make his peace with her in his usual way—upon his knees.

"*Mutterchen*, if you knew how bitterly I blame myself for this enstrangement! I really have just got to try again and again to make you forgive him."

"Well, perhaps there was a time when I was quite ready to forgive him." This was true. Guido remembered the week following the Erna Gottschalk climax, and his heart smote him. "I must be cruel only to be kind," he murmured.

"What came of it?" Frau Ursula pursued. "Nothing. Hauser has forgotten all about me by this time."

"I think not, Mother. Mother, if he came to you now, would you forgive him?"

"Now?" Frau Ursula demanded. "*Now? Why now?*"

"Would you?"

"*Why now?*"

"I'm not going to answer your question, because in repeating it you have answered mine," Guido said, thoughtfully. Rising, he dusted his knees.

"That's cryptic."

"I think not."

"At any rate, there is no sense in this continual bickering. Hauser has had a full year in which to make advances. He has not made them. Granting, for the sake of argument only, that I still care for him, is it delicate on your part, is it kind, to continually prod a wound that has not yet cicatrized? You forget, my boy, that I am your mother."

"You are *not* my mother—there's the cardinal point as far as Hauser is concerned," Guido replied. "And I am not forgetting it. I am not forgetting that it was the miracle of your love for me that landed you in this mess."

Frau Ursula moved irritably in her chair.

"Look here, Guido," she began with great energy, and then, unexpectedly, stopped short, as if sober reflection had killed her impulse toward candor. A subtle excitement seemed to have taken possession of her. Twice, thrice she opened her lips and closed them again without uttering a word.

"Out with it, Mother," said Guido.

"I am going to tell you something which I have omitted so far to tell you," Frau Ursula said. "Hauser had no excuse for being jealous of you. You were my motive for becoming Mrs. Hauser. I married him solely because I had promised your mother that you were to grow up in America—and I was mortally afraid of coming to a new country alone."

Guido, wholly stupefied, stared at his mother in silence. Frau Ursula, now that she had broken her long silence, experienced a delightful sensation of relief. Borne on the wings of this feelings, she continued her story.

"I do not want you to think that I allowed him to believe I cared for him. I made my reason for accepting his offer of marriage very plain. He needed money. He needed it because he had ambitions far beyond his station. Your

mother, after I promised to take you, made me a gift of a large sum of money. She did this so as to give me freedom in carrying out her instructions in doing for you until such time as matters touching your estate were adjusted. I think, also, she wished to pay me the compliment of telling me that she trusted me implicitly. Well, I promised to loan Hauser a generous slice of this sum of money. I felt justified in doing so because I was marrying him in order to secure a legal protector. I believed—and Hauser allowed me to believe—that financial considerations were his sole motive in marrying me. I did not love him and I did not want his love, and it was clearly understood, you understand, that we were to be friends, nothing more. That, I think, I told you before. But he did love me. And it complicated matters.”

“Well,” said Guido, with a smile, “I cannot blame him for loving you, and I do not blame him for trying to win your love, and I do not think that he was doing something particularly wicked in marrying you under false pretenses, as it were. Also, I do not think you seriously blame him for being very less mercenary and sordid than you believed him to be.” He stopped in sudden confusion. Frau Ursula noticed the embarrassment which had hushed him so abruptly, but did not seek enlightenment concerning its cause. Guido, having mentioned mercenarines and sordidness, flushed and faltered because in one of those lightning flashes of thought which will at times tear their way unbidden through the mind, there had been presented to him the wholly unsuspected possibility that the gift of a large sum of money which Varvara Alexandrovna had promised and ultimately made Frau Ursula had been the real reason which had swayed her in agreeing to take charge of himself. He was not particularly proud of the thought, and whipped it away angrily. Its visitation had lowered him in his own esteem. He thought he must be fundamentally base or such a ridiculous, unjust and ungrateful nugget of thought would never have emerged from the subterranean caverns of the mind where slumber incipient ideas.

But, since this was not her motive in taking charge of him, what in heaven’s name had been her real motive?

He understood more plainly every moment that Hauser

had had every excuse in the world for thinking him her own child.

"Well," said Frau Ursula, "sordid or not, Hauser loved me. I disliked him mildly at first, then I hated him, and finally I came to love him. Just how that happened I cannot say. But it happened. At any rate, I have told you all this because I am very tired of having you treat me as if I were a lovelorn *Backfisch*."

Guido's gaze was abstracted, and he lowered his eyes, making her wonder whether she had exceeded the bounds of delicacy in speaking thus frankly. But Guido had barely listened to the tail-end of her story. His thoughts were pounding away at the problem which concerned itself with Frau Ursula's original motive in saddling herself with his charge. That there had been a strong personal motive he no longer doubted. Now, also, he shrewdly realized that Frau Ursula's suppression of her real motive underlay her trouble with Hauser from beginning to end.

He felt that out of the general nebulosity of his thought-circlings something really luminous had at last condensed—something luminous and something tangible. And he asked himself why in heaven's name he lacked the courage to question his mother point-blank. That he lacked that courage, was food for further reflection. He believed in intuitions. Here was an inhibitive intuition which, if properly pursued, should lead to somewhere.

"Well," he said, finally, feeling it incumbent to say something, "I won't refer to the matter again. Still, I do feel sorry for your husband. He could not look upon me in any other light than an interloper, a waif who was stealing away the love which should have been his."

"I wish you would not habitually refer to yourself as a waif," said Frau Ursula, tartly. "You were neither a street arab nor a beggar. Both of your parents, in addition to being well-to-do, were extraordinarily talented and gifted persons."

"Do you know," Guido said, "you have told me much about my mother, but very little about my father."

"That is so," said Frau Ursula smoothly, "because I met your mother under circumstances which forced upon both of us a hotbed sort of intimacy."

"But you knew my father better than my mother, did you not," Guido asked, casually.

"Better? In what way—better?"

Every human being has certain peculiarities of speech or gesture or intonation of voice by which those who share with them in the revealing routine of daily life can divine much of what is passing under the surface. By this token Guido knew that his mother, in thrusting a question at him in reply to a question, was evading or masking something. It took no great genius at penetration to perceive the connection between her question, which rebounded almost automatically from her inner consciousness, and the problem on which he was exercising his psychological wisdom teeth.

"I mean, of course, you knew him longer than you knew Varvara Alexandrovna."

"Longer? Oh, yes. He found me a good listener. Our conversations consisted principally of discussions of his Synthesis—the Synthesis of which I have told you and which was to be the outcome of all political systems of the world."

There hung about Frau Ursula, as she delivered herself of this entire passage, an atmosphere of denial, of refutation, of repudiation, which strengthened Guido's conviction that he had all but put his finger upon her true motive in assuming charge of himself.

He took the thought to his room with him, and the closer the range at which he examined it, the better did fact and theory seem to tally. Frau Ursula had loved his father. There could be no doubt of it. Either he had not returned her love, or had been refused because of the disparity in their ages. Guido thought the first contingent the more likely. His adoration of Frau Ursula did not in the least blind him to those feminine peculiarities which she held in common with her sex, among which he reckoned a faint betrayal of triumph—faint in the well-bred woman to the vanishing point of shadowiness—when mention is made of the name of a rejected lover. There was, perhaps, something a little uncanny in the boy's shrewdness in reading human character and human motives. It was the very last talent with which his progenitors had dreamed of endowing him.

At any rate, Frau Ursula had loved his father. That would explain her willingness to have foisted upon her a sickly, puny, unhealthy, unlovely babe. That would explain her willingness to become an emigrant. That would explain her willingness to tie herself by the outward bond of marriage to a man whom she did not love. For, no woman—nor man—who is heart and fancy free, for whom, in consequence, happiness in love may be lurking just around the corner, would be content to enter the padlocked cage of matrimony for the sake of expediency. Thus argued our young psychologist. That, too, would explain Hauser's long and difficult suit.

Guido employed all his leisure time for a week or so in looking at the idea from every possible angle. Then he did a remarkable thing. He called on Hauser.

Without being announced, he was shown into the sumptuous library—how plain and humble his mother's home seemed when compared with the exquisite simplicity of this room!—where Hauser was sitting at his Chippendale writing table, pencil in hand, apparently checking up figures. Guido stopped in the center of the floor until Hauser should look up. When Hauser did look up, he started violently on seeing Guido, rising so abruptly that he upset his chair.

"Your mother is not ill, is she?" he demanded.

"No, sir, she is quite well."

Hauser regarded Guido searchingly.

"Be seated," he said, abruptly.

Guido restored the chair which Hauser had upset to its normal position before seating himself opposite to the man whom he had called "father" for so many years. A curious possessive sense of home was engendered in him by the familiar surroundings, the comfortable, velvet-cushioned window-seats, the book-lined walls, the air of literary leisure and seclusion which reigned here and fell upon the sense with the soothing coolness of chill fingers upon feverish brow. Suddenly, also, he was filled with uncertainty as to the good taste of his errand.

"I hardly know how to begin," he said.

Hauser, with a gesture of impatience, pushed the inkwell to the far end of the table.

"I want to say, sir, first of all that I realize I owe you a very humble apology."

Hauser bowed, a little contemptuously, Guido thought.

"I realize, of course, that an apology cannot make up for the unhappiness of which I was the direct cause," Guido continued.

Hauser, who had sat with averted eyes, now looked Guido squarely between the eyes.

"I do not imagine you have come here to tell me all this," he said, in his voice something of the biting sarcasm which had so harrowed Guido in his childhood. "Say what you have come to say, if you please."

"I came, because I am convinced that——" he broke off.

"That what?" Hauser asked, less harshly.

"That my mother, sir, is as fond of you as ever."

"Then, my lad, let me tell you she is not very fond of me."

Guido was taken aback. He had felt so certain of his premises, and had been so full of his errand of conciliation that he was entirely unprepared for this sort of treatment.

"At least, sir, upon several occasions, she has given me a very strong impression of being deeply attached to you."

"Upon what occasions?" Hauser demanded.

"For instance, when you wrote her that Erna Gottschalk was not the most suitable companion in the world for me."

"And did you not resent my interference, my officiousness?"

"How could I? I had found her out before you wrote my mother. And after what had happened here, I mean after my behavior to you, I thought it more than kind of you to interest yourself in my behalf."

"Supposing I interested myself in your behalf only because I knew your mother would suffer if her precious lad came to grief?"

Guido winced. Hauser was piling the agony on with a trowel.

"I realized fully, sir, of course, that that was your only reason for doing so."

"Then why did you pretend otherwise just now?" Hauser demanded, angrily bringing his fist down upon the table.

Guido's muscles stiffened, but he checked his impulse toward anger.

"Because, sir," he said, with the utmost deliberation, "I desired to present myself as your debtor. My sense of defeat and humiliation, you will admit, does not suffer diminution thereby."

Hauser stared at Guido for fully half a minute before replying to this.

"I've treated you roughly," he said. "You can hardly blame me. I'll try to be more generous. Now, perhaps, you'll be good enough to tell me the purpose of your visit?"

"I came in hopes that a reconciliation might be brought about," Guido said. "I feel certain that it could be brought about."

"H'm." Hauser pondered this. "Did your mother send you?" he asked, with sharp suspicion.

"No, indeed not. She does not even know I am here."

"Don't you think you have taken a good deal upon yourself?"

"You forget, sir, I am trying to undo the mischief for which I am responsible."

Hauser rose, viciously kicked his chair out of his path, and, striding to the window, began drumming against the panes. Presently he came back to Guido.

"And how do you think a reconciliation could be brought about?"

"I think, sir, if you still care for my mother, care *enough* about her, you need only write her and indicate your hopes and wishes."

"Are you aware, Guido, that there was something more in our quarrel than was apparent at the surface?"

"Yes. And this is one of the things—I may be blundering unpardonably—but I must speak to you about this."

"Well, go on," said Hauser, a little uneasily.

"You believed me—perhaps still believe me—to be your wife's child. I wish it were so, but unhappily it is not so."

"How can you be certain?"

"Because I have recently received a message from my real mother—the Russian woman. And now I would like to ask you a question. Are you aware, sir, of my mother's motive in bothering with me, the son of a woman whom she knew superficially only, and of whom I am certain she thoroughly disapproved and disapproves?"

Hauser's eyes met the boy's and interlocked with his.

"No," he said, "I do not. It was dearth of such a motive that made me believe you were her child."

"I think I can tell you what her motive was."

"She told you——"

"No—I put two and two together. I think, sir, she loved my father. The chain of evidence is very strong to support this view. If you will think back——" and he gave Hauser his reasons.

"By Heck, I believe you are right," Hauser exclaimed, when Guido had finished. "I am sure you are right. Your theory explains what otherwise remains inexplicable. What a blind, opinionated, stupid fool I was!"

"And now that things are straightening themselves out, and you can say with perfect honesty that you believe I am not her child, you will try and make up, won't you?"

Hauser did not reply. The excitement had died out of his face. He looked old and haggard and stricken. And he sat as still as a man in a trance. Suddenly he came to with a start.

"It's too late, Guido," he said in a quiet, kind voice. "It's too late. I must tell you that I am on the point of writing to ask my wife to agree to a divorce."

"Oh, no!" Guido exclaimed. "Surely not."

"I want you to believe me when I tell you that I had decided upon this step fully a month ago—over a month ago. My decision is irrevocable. In time you will know why I have decided upon this step."

Guido felt crushed. His hopes had been raised only to be cruelly dashed. After a moment he said, lamely:

"Is there nothing that can make you change your mind?"

Hauser merely shook his head, as if his heart were too full for utterance; he rose, indicating thereby that the interview was over. He walked with Guido to the door. At the threshold Guido said:

"You'll not speak of what passed between us——"

"I will never tell what passed between us to-night," Hauser said, stretching out his hand with a kindly gesture.

Then these two, who, in the past had hated each other so cordially, shook hands as heartily as if they had always been the best of friends, and, for the first time mutually respecting each other, parted.

Hauser's letter to his wife, asking her consent to a divorce, was received within a week. She was singularly calm and composed as she handed the letter to Guido to read. It was brief and businesslike. It pointed out to her that in Jersey, at the end of two years, desertion is a legal cause for divorce, providing that the party who has been deserted can produce proofs of having made an endeavor, at stated intervals, to persuade the truant to return home.

"Therefore," the letter concluded, "you will receive from me at intervals of from two to three months written requests to return to my home. You will understand that these letters are purely formal—are, so to speak, the stepping stones to the divorce which you desired as long as ten years ago, and which I now desire quite as heartily as you do yourself."

That last sentence made Guido catch his breath. It struck home like a lash. It struck home far too cruelly—he decided after a second perusal. A woman might write a thing like that on the spur of the moment, but for a man to put a thing like that on paper was—well, the sentence didn't ring true.

But what more was there to do? Guido was more strongly convinced than ever that these two still loved each other.

All Frau Ursula said was:

"Well, I suppose he has fallen in love with a prettier and younger face."

And that evening he heard his mother singing an old German folk-song under her breath, as she prepared for the night in her own room, as if she were in the merriest of moods.

Then Guido did something he rarely did. He used the worst word in his vocabulary.

"Damn," he said. It was his method of protesting against the stultifying hypocrisy of pride and middle-age.

CHAPTER VIII

IN spite of repeated invitations, Dobronov had latterly resisted the temptation to week-end at Anasquoit with remarkable persistence. Sergius Ivanovich did not always trouble to reply to letters—an eccentricity which would have been intolerable in any other person—but when letter after letter remained unanswered, Guido decided one afternoon to look up his old friend and tutor.

Dobronov was not at home, but the door of his wretched tenement room was unlocked, and Guido entered. An hour elapsed but Dobronov did not return. Guido scribbled a note on a leaf from a note-book, and left it on Dobronov's table. Again Dobronov did not reply, and again Guido went to call on him with the same result as before. When he called the third time, he stopped to see Mrs. Gallagher, the woman two floors below, who had loaned Dobronov the supper-plates on the evening he entertained the Russian emigrants.

"Oh, sir, I'd been hoping you'd stop in to see me," the little woman said. "I've been trying to catch your footstep on the stairs, but it's that many feet that wamble by all day and so much noise on the street, and such a racket made by my fambly of children, that I would have missed ye again. It's a message from your friend I'm wanting to deliver."

"Has he moved?"

"Well," said Mrs. Gallagher, "he has and he hasn't. Mr. Dobbiduff says, says he, 'If the handsome lad whom ye've seen calls again, tell him he'll find me at this address on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. But on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays I'm at the address I've written down for you.' Just a minute, sir—" and diving down into a huge earthenware flower-pot which had been gilded, and which occupied upon the mantel-piece the place of honor, she began to haul out such a medley of things that it seemed as if the contents of a boy's pocket had been

bodily transferred to the pot. Shoe laces, cord, bails, bits of pencil, an old broken jack-knife, and innumerable bits of yellow wrapping paper were unearthed. These scraps of paper she sorted with astonishing rapidity, apparently recognizing them by their size, shape and varying degree of greasiness, and therefore not troubling to read the memorandums scribbled upon them.

"Here it is," she said, finally, handing Guido a ragged, jagged, lard-stained triangular piece of paper.

Guido received it, and read the address with considerable astonishment.

"Are you sure this is the address?" he asked. "There's no name."

"His name is on the other side," Mrs. Gallagher replied, casually, "and it's all right about his being in a swell neighborhood. That's where he hangs out now on the days I've given ye."

Guido thanked her, and within half an hour reached the address on Riverside Drive noted on the paper. He had a horrid fear that Dobronov, seized by some new religious vagary, had hired himself out as a dishwasher or a vegetable cleaner or something equally impossible; and, as the address given on the grease-stained paper proved to be that of an imposing-looking apartment house, Guido, with a sinking heart, anticipated considerable trouble in locating Dobronov, who had omitted to mention the name of the family in whose care he could be found.

What then, was Guido's amazement, on approaching the palatial apartment house, to see Sergius Ivanovich standing in the center of the lobby, near a palm-lined fountain, idly twirling a cane and engaged in animated conversation with a young man who was dressed in the height of style. And so, for that matter, was Sergius Ivanovich. So metamorphosed was his appearance that Guido could not be certain at first whether it was really Dobronov whom he was beholding. He edged close enough to catch the voice. Then he was certain. The glass of fashion and the mold of form was indeed Sergius Ivanovich.

Guido waited a few moments, hoping the conversation would come to an end without his intervention, and while waiting, studied the appearance of Dobronov's friend. He was good-looking enough, and his raiment was perfect, but

there was, so Guido thought, something vicious and depraved in the handsome young face. What could Dobronov the ascetic want with such a friend? Guido's curiosity grew apace. He could contain himself no longer, and approaching the two young men he addressed Dobronov by name.

"Guido Guidovich, as I live!" Dobronov exclaimed, joyously seizing Guido's hand. "Ah, I am glad to see you—so glad. Hopkins," he continued, addressing himself to his companion, "Mr. von Estritz is a very old friend whom I have not seen in the longest time—my fault entirely. You will excuse me, I know. I have so much to say to him."

"Well, what's the matter with saying it while I'm there, too," said Hopkins. "Why not invite me to become acquainted with him over a bottle of that wonderful Russian cordial of yours?"

"My dear fellow, you are inverted hospitality incarnate, as I know," Dobronov exclaimed, gravely, "but you must excuse me to-day. You really must."

"Inverted hospitality incarnate," muttered the persistent Hopkins, somewhat heavily. "Now what the devil—are you accusing me of being a grafter?"

"No, if you were I would know better than to try and get rid of you," said the astonishing new Dobronov.

"Well, I'm not so sure that you are going to get rid of me," retorted the tenacious Hopkins.

"Oh, yes, I am, and solely as a matter of humanity to yourself."

"You sure do have the queerest way of saying things. What d'ye mean?" Hopkins demanded, surlily.

"My friend and I are going to discuss something which would bore you to death," Dobronov suggested, craftily.

"And what's that?"

"Our souls."

"Well, I don't know about having a soul. I don't believe I've got one."

"Neither do I," said Dobronov, "but I have and so has my friend."

"If that's meant to be smart——" Hopkins began, truculently.

"No. It was merely meant to state the truth. Our discussion, furthermore, will be conducted in Russian."

"Good-night," said Hopkins, with an air of defeat. "You sure are some nut, Dobby. So long."

"I sure am," said "Dobby." "So long, Hopkins." And slipping his hand under Guido's arm, he led the way to the elevator. A few minutes later the two friends were seated opposite to each other in a smoking room more ornately furnished than any room Guido had ever seen. The furniture, which, as he learned later on, was made of peartree wood, was magnificently carved, and was upholstered in bright red leather. The Persian rugs which lay on the parquetry flooring were priceless and the light which illumined the room, which was an inside room, sifted through cupolas of gold-embellished Bohemian glass.

Between them, on the lizard skin which lay athwart the table stood a cigarette box of gold encrusted with jewels and inlaid with enamel.

There was about the entire room something of Oriental, almost barbaric magnificence. This effect was further heightened by the paintings which hung upon walls—two priceless Gérômes and a nude by Cabanal—and by the tiger and leopard skins which were flung with seeming carelessness across the backs of the chairs, in front of the fireplace, and across the couch.

Guido, bursting though he was with curiosity, smoked his cigarette in well-simulated indifference. He knew Dobronov too well to risk sending him off at a tangent in consequence of an ill-advised question. When Dobronov was ready to tell his tale, he would require no prompting.

Dobronov, having pothered over the cigarettes, and the order for champagne and little sweet cakes, which he gave to a man-servant dressed in Russian garb, threw himself into a huge armchair, and crossing his legs in leisurely, approved man-of-the-world fashion, said:

"Well, Guido Guidovich, I suppose you are dying to hear all about it."

"I surely am," Guido replied, adding dryly: "I confess. I was prepared to find you working as a porter or a garbage collector. What I ran into was wholly unexpected."

Dobronov laughed.

"Shortly after you went to the country, I cabled my

agent in Russia to send me money, much money. Frankly, I didn't expect to get it. I was therefore greatly surprised when I received a return cable notifying me that a sum twice as large as that I had asked for was deposited right here in New York. It seems my agent had regularly, every year, sent a large amount of my income to this bank in New York and had it placed to my account."

"A faithful steward," said Guido. "Which shows you have luck, Dobronov. And now tell me, what decided you to make a change in your way of living, and why, having made that change, do you still maintain your tenement menage?"

Dobronov suddenly became grave.

"I will answer your second question first," he said. "I keep my rooms in the tenement house because I live there three days a week, as Mrs. Gallagher had probably informed you. Your other question it will take a long time to answer in intelligible terms."

Guido raised his eyebrows and regarded his friend searchingly.

"Have you found me as dull as all that?" he queried.

"No, but you are an American."

"That," Guido responded, laughing, "I accept as a compliment, though it was not intended for one. Yes, I am an American, thank God. And now inform me, if you please, in what way does my condition of being an American undermine my ability to comprehend your bipartite mode of living?"

Dobronov suddenly sloughed off his new society manner, and emerging from the depth of the chair in which he was lounging, demanded:

"Guido Guidovich, confess, you have, in the past, thought me a little mad?"

"No, Sergius Ivanovich. I have thought you eccentric, but mad, never. I tell you frankly that the extravagance and the luxury in which I find you installed, the peculiar sort of friends which you have apparently made, and for whose sake you have been neglecting your old friends, fills me with a vague alarm. I beg of you to be frank with me."

"Ah, my poor friend," Dobronov murmured, "you will be a good deal more alarmed before I am through with my story."

"You have not begun it yet," Guido reminded him.

"I have put off beginning my story for four months. But I see that I can stave off the moment of confessing myself to you no longer. Know then, Guido Guidovich, a word uttered by Professor Geddes last winter has lighted in my heart the fires of true religious apperception."

Guido's heart sank within him. Some whimsicality of the Professor's, he did not doubt, had been seized upon by Dobronov, and, with his eerie facility in religious theorizing, had been used as a basis for his latest ethical experiment. Guido forced himself to remain silent by an effort purely physical. To interpolate a question at this crucial point of Dobronov's narrative would cause Dobronov's nimble mind to scamper off in a thousand different directions at one time and wreck his story ere it was well begun.

"Professor Geddes one day suggested that vice might be as necessary as virtue, evil as essential as good, because Providence, or God, or whatever you chose to call the Absolute, may require the friction thus engendered to maintain the spiritual equilibrium of the world."

Guido experienced a moment of what seemed to himself suspended animation. He was too horrified for words. He had a dim foreboding of the sequel to Dobronov's prelude. Dobronov, as he had suspected, had taken one of the Professor's nonsensical remarks seriously. Dobronov, meanwhile, was explaining that he had lain awake nights puzzling over this remark.

"You know, Guido Guidovich," he said, "what a strong disinclination I have always felt to having a religious label attached to me, and yet, impelled by a seemingly contrary current, I have been condemned to an endless quest for a religious faith which I could embrace with every doctrine, tenet and dogma which it contained. I have been profoundly unhappy, profoundly *unrestful*."

Guido nodded. He did not trust himself to speak.

Dobronov continued:

"After months of speculation," he said, "I came to the conclusion that Professor Geddes, in voicing an idle thought, had builded better than he knew. That he himself was unaware of the profound truth of the statement which had breezily launched upon the world, does not in any way impair the fundamental significance of this truth.

"I am entirely convinced, Guido Guidovich, that this is the central, the vitalizing fact upon which the Universe is built, which is only another way of saying that the friction resulting from the abrasion of virtue by vice, or from the suppression of vice by virtue, is God's will."

Cold fingers seemed to be at play among Guido's heart-strings.

"What follows?" he asked.

"Can you not guess, Guido Guidovich? All my life I have tried to live as virtuously as possible. My life was absorbed in my quest for the right religion. I lived frugally, humbly, poorly, decently, honestly, kindly. I practiced every virtue. I can say that now without incurring the odium which accrues to the man who praises himself. For in thus praising myself, I am in reality dispraising myself. Do you follow me?"

"Perfectly," said Guido, who rightly felt that all symptoms of a disease must be laid before the physician who desires to effect a cure.

"Ah! I did not hope to find you so sympathetic," said Dobronov, artlessly. "You see, Guido Guidovich, while I practiced all so-called Christian virtues, I was in reality violating God's primary law—I was helping to increase the one great force, Good, but I was doing nothing to augment the other equally necessary force, Evil! Therefore, I was doing all in my power to destroy the constant ratio of divine energy, to upset the Eternal Equipoise, to undermine the physical cohesiveness and the spiritual dynamics of the world."

"Are you not attaching too much importance to one poor life?" Guido asked, warily feeling his way toward a fulcrum, upon which to rest the lever of talk which was to retrieve Dobronov's sanity.

"Not at all," Dobronov cried, eagerly. "I do not wish you to think that I am overvaluing myself. But I hold one belief which has not shared the vicissitudes which befell my other beliefs. I hold, rightly or wrongly, that each one of us should so arrange his life that if all human beings embraced the same method of living, the divine will would be completely realized."

"And you think you have now found that universal recipe for living?"



"How you do put things, Guido Guidovich. Yes, I think I have found the universal recipe for living. For you see, I live virtuously and in dire poverty three days a week, and three days I devote to strengthening the alternating current. Thus do I help maintain the constant ratio of divine energy."

"And may I ask by what means you strengthen the alternating current?"

"Ah!" Dobronov exclaimed, "that I cannot tell you."

"You do not mean, I hope, that you have joined a secret society?"

"No, no, not that!" Dobronov exclaimed.

"Then why not be frank and answer my question?"

"Because, Guido Guidovich," Dobronov retorted, with the utmost candor, "in paying my poll-tax to Vice I have been constrained to embrace practices of which I would not speak to you for worlds."

There was something so engaging, so artless, so childlike even in the way Dobronov made this statement that Guido could barely keep from laughing.

"I do not quite get your point of view," Guido replied, craftily. "I am one of your best friends, and yet——"

"My best friend, and my dearest," Dobronov exclaimed.

"I thank you, Sergius Ivanovich," Guido said, quite gravely. "Very good, then. Is it kind, is it Christian, is it humane deliberately to cut off your best friend from salvation?"

Guido felt like a hypocrite as he said this, but Dobronov's mind was out of focus, and a direct approach therefore out of the question.

Dobronov showed great embarrassment.

"You do not understand me, Guido Guidovich," he said. "My recipe for living calls for—I hardly like to name the thing in your presence, so exquisite does your purity seem to me."

"Immorality?"

"Yes, immorality."

"Construe, I beg of you," said Guido. "Immorality is such a vague, such a spacious term."

"You must pardon me," said the astonishing Dobronov, "but I will not."

"Why not?"

"I have already told you. To me you seem spotless. I wish you to remain so."

"Until this hour, Sergius Ivanovich," Guido retorted, "*you* have seemed spotless to *me*. Now I am suffering the unspeakable sorrow of seeing the friend whom I reckoned as half a saint fallen from his high estate. But you have given me good and sufficient reasons for all that. According to your view, the path of salvation for one is the path of salvation for all. There is no other way. Why, then, refuse to let me enter the kingdom in heaven hand in hand with you?"

"I would sooner die!" Dobronov exclaimed, passionately. "Nor did I speak in this connection of salvation or of the kingdom of heaven."

"You spoke of fulfilling the divine will. As a Christian you believe in individual salvation, in immortality, in the kingdom of heaven. May I ask, does your philosophy exclude from salvation the man who has resolutely fulfilled the divine will, contrary to his own predilections and desires?"

Dobronov, feeling the web of Guido's inexorable logic closing about him, stared hopelessly at his friend. And suddenly Guido's self-restraint and frigid surface acquiescence in his friend's temporary religious insanity went to pieces.

"I have heard you with patience, Sergius Ivanovich," he cried, in a voice so authoritative that Dobronov started and grew pale and sank back supinely in his chair. "Now you shall hear me."

"I always thought you unequivocally sincere, Sergius Ivanovich," Guido continued, "but in the knowledge which this hour has brought me of your character, I see germinating in you not alone insincerity but an unbelievable levity in dealing with sacred things.

"Do you know what you are, Sergius Ivanovich? You are a spiritual sensualist. The physical voluptuary artificially stimulates his senses by incessant change, and similarly do you seek to flagellate your jaded spiritual appetite by new and ever new religious doctrines.

"At first you may have been—probably were—entirely sincere in what it pleased you to call your quest. But your quest has long since degenerated into a farce, and from



being laughable it has sunk to the plane of downright unethics.

"You have the effrontery to speak of the Divine Essence as partaking of Evil as well as of Good.

"In doing so, you blaspheme, yes, you blaspheme."

"There is not a religious system worthy of the name which does not lay the utmost stress upon the necessity of eliminating evil, of striving against and away from it, of fighting it incessantly, trucelessly, ruthlessly, unendingly. If intuition is a trustworthy guide, and you have always held that intuition in spiritual matters is everything, then this one truth—the permanence of Good and its supremacy over Evil—must remain forever incontestable.

"Christ, in whom you profess to believe, though it is sacrilege for one who like yourself has prostituted conscience and intellect to even speak of Christ!—Christ, I say, places such a high value on the conquest of evil by good that he said: 'I say unto you likewise joy shall there be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.'

"And what does that mean, Sergius Ivanovich? Surely not that one soul can never be worth more than ninety-nine souls, which would be a mathematical absurdity, but that Sin is hideous, with a ninety-nine-fold hideousness, because of the corruption which inevitably follows in its wake—a corruption which afflicts not merely him who has sinned, but, through his influence, or contact, or blood ties spreads like a pestilence among his entire circle of friends, relatives and acquaintances. Sin is as truculent and treacherous an enemy of mankind, and therefore of the Divine Essence, as a disease germ, which resists isolation and classification, is of bodily health. And that is why Jesus counterpoised ninety-nine virtuous persons against one sinner; for one vicious person can work more havoc in the spiritual and physical world than ninety-nine virtuous persons have power to undo.

"And you—you, whose life was once as pure as that of any duly accredited and canonized saint, you, Sergius Ivanovich, have now signed yourself over to Satan."

Dobronov, who had shown no resentment whatever of his friend's acrimonious arraignment, listened in growing wonder to Guido's harangue, and now exclaimed:

"Guido Guidovich, say on—you speak as one inspired. Verily, verily, my friend, I believe that you, after all, are right."

"No," said Guido, vigorously, "you do not think that I am right. You know that I am right."

"No, I do not *know* it," said Dobronov, with great earnestness. "Here is my principal objection against sliding back into the old comfortable belief that right is right and wrong is wrong. Answer me that objection to my satisfaction and I will say that you are right."

"Well, let me hear your objection," said Guido, with jove-like assurance.

"Throughout nature we see two forces, equally strong and equally essential, which oppose each other. There is, as it were, a dual current in everything life touches. There is matter, there is energy. There is adhesion, there is cohesion; there is, first, last and all the time, the centrifugal force which tends to deposit the earth in the sun's interior, and would do so if it were not for the centripetal force which, left to itself, would send us whirling off into space.

"Now, Guido Guidovich, Good and Evil may be likened to these two great forces which, delicately counteracting each other, are both of equal importance and of equal power. Left to itself, Evil, like the centripetal force, would destroy us utterly; left uncounteracted, would Good not also be subversive of the world? The resultant equation is what is needed—is God's Will."

"Sergius Ivanovich," said Guido, after a moment's sharp reflection, "though there is no warrant for believing that natural law has its close parallel in the spiritual world, I will accept your metaphor. Evil, you say, is like the centripetal force, and tends to hurl us into space. Good, being centrifugal in action would, uncounteracted, cast us into the lap of the Sun. Say that in the spiritual world God—the Divine Essence—stands in place of the life-giving Sun. What harm, then, would come to us—the entire world—if the centrifugal force—Good—remained uncounteracted? Is your faith so small that you fear contact with or absorption by the Divine?"

Dobronov stared at Guido, apparently speechless. He had become very pale. The two friends sat in silence for fully a minute. Then Dobronov said:



"Guido Guidovich, I repeat, I believe you are inspired. My poor understanding struggled in vain to comprehend the point which you have made plain to me in a few words. Henceforth you shall be my teacher. Whither you lead, there will I follow."

"I cannot lead you, Sergius Ivanovich," Guido said, gently. "You know that my belief does not coincide with yours. Your faith and mine diverge at every point."

"So you think," said Dobronov, "but I do not believe it. Guido Guidovich, in converting me you have converted yourself. Is it not so?"

"I wish it were so with all my heart," said Guido, fervently. "There is nothing I desire so much as a strong religious faith, a strong religious bias. But faith is a gift—I must live in hopes of it."

"If you cannot lead me, you can, at least, direct me, you can help me as you have helped me even now," Dobronov retorted. There was something pathetic in the childlike simplicity with which he said these words. Guido's pulse quickened. The highest compliment of his young life was being paid him. A human soul in dire distress was turning to him for guidance and for support.

"Tell me, Guido Guidovich, am I undone for all time because I have sinned?"

"You know you are not," Guido said. "You know—from the very quotation I cited just now—that the Christian faith asks an honest repentance—nothing more."

Dobronov's pallor was almost deathlike.

"But do you yourself believe that sin can be wiped away so easily as all that?"

"How could I believe that?" Guido exclaimed. "How can anyone wipe away the consequences of sin—or of crime. Have you done murder? Have you cheated, or robbed? I do not ask you to tell me what you have done. I do ask you to summon your actions before the tribunal of your own conscience. If only you will allow your conscience to speak freely and without prejudice, it will be your own best counselor."

"I have not done murder," said Dobronov. "I have not robbed nor have I cheated. But I have gambled; I drank heavily; and—there was the Universal Temptation."

"Ah!" Guido cried indignantly, "and it was you, you,

Sergius Ivanovich, you urged prayer upon me in my hour of weakness. I am ashamed of you."

"Do not chide me," said Dobronov. "I am very miserable."

"Sergius Ivanovich, have you injured a woman?"

After a moment's reflection, Dobronov replied quaintly:

"I am, as you know, the most unworldly of individuals. But I truly believe, Guido Guidovich, that both the lady's character and reputation were damaged beyond the possibility of further injury."

He said this without a glimmer of humor, and Guido, to hide the smile that would come, passed his hand over his mouth.

"Then, as you haven't the undoing of another soul upon your conscience, I should say you have much to be thankful for, Sergius Ivanovich."

Dobronov's pale face flushed, and he said, hastily and with warmth:

"I could never have injured an innocent or a virtuous woman. I hope you believe me."

Guido leaned forward impulsively and touched his friend's hand.

"Sergius Ivanovich," he said, "is that not the best argument of all against this preposterous nonsense with which you have been bemused? You refused to take me with you to the haunts into which the 'alternating current' had swept you. You would not have seduced an innocent girl, nor cheated an unsophisticated lad at cards. I do not believe, my friend, that you are very deep-dyed in guilt, for in your heart of hearts you have never faltered or wavered in your belief that the Divine Principle is divine, wholly, entirely, unmitigatedly, unmodifiedly, unequivocally divine, without a touch of the demoniacal. Is this not true?"

"Ah!" Dobronov cried, impetuously, "what an ass I made of myself. What is wrong with me, Guido Guidovich? Why should I have been snared into such a pit of perverted reasoning?"

"I would like to answer that question by giving you a piece of advice."

"Say on, my friend."

"What you need to do, Sergius Ivanovich, is to join

some church. You need the moral support of a religious organization. You have played with religion so long that you have come to regard it as a sort of mechanico-spiritual toy endowed with a fair imitation of perpetual motion. It is highest time that you reinstate religion in the holy of holies, in the inner shrine of your soul."

"Ah," Dobronov replied, "that is all very well. But there is always some point of doctrine in which I diverge."

"Never mind that. Analyze your faith. Extract its cardinal tenet and if those principal points are provided for, I think you can afford to ignore minor differences."

"Hypocrisy?"

"I think not. Have you ever thought of joining the Quakers? They, I think, fulfill all your principal requirements—absence of ritual in worship, absence of a salaried clergy, pacificism unequivocal, the belief in the Indwelling Light, and the insistence upon personal purity."

"Ah!" Dobronov cried in real panic, "I have fallen so far below that last requirement."

"That is a thing of the past," said Guido, with decision. "Dismiss it from your mind. The only cardinal point wherein you may differ is that Friends do not attach any importance to poverty as a religious practice. And allow me to point out to you, Sergius Ivanovich, that if everyone embraced poverty as a vocation, the world would starve. Now even you would not wish that. And as you believe in so ordering your life that, if all men did likewise, God's will would be fulfilled, you must, in order to be consistent, discard that particular point of your belief."

"You have a remarkable intellect, Guido Guidovich," Dobronov rejoined, thoughtfully. "What you say is strictly logical. Still—the practice of poverty seems to me a great essential. Even if I am guilty of inconsistency in holding it."

"Even if it seems to you essential I think you ought to abandon it in order to affiliate yourself with the Friends. A strong spiritual kinship exists between yourself and this denomination. In view of your general acquiescence, I see no impropriety or hypocrisy in allowing yourself to be ruled on this one point by the unanimous voice of many thousands of kindred souls. For think what you will gain, Sergius Ivanovich, from such an affiliation. You have

slipped from the narrow path once, you may slip again. It is highest time for you to submit yourself to classification, and, forgive me for adding, to the discipline of a religious body. Also, is it not fair to assume that if all these kindred souls disagree with you on one point only, it is your reasoning, not theirs, which is at fault?"

Dobronov made a wry face, and Guido continued:

"You would certainly have to discard the rôle of an idler. Neither rich idlers nor poor, unless I am misinformed, are tolerated in their midst by the Friends."

Dobronov sighed deeply.

"Perhaps you are right," he said. "I dare say you are right. And as you say, so be it. I will relinquish the practice of poverty. I will pile riches upon riches. I shall make men happy in this world and unhappy in the next by using every means in my power to further their material welfare. I suppose that is what you want. Well, I will do it. I will begin taking instruction in the faith of the Friends at once. And in a little while I will join them. But upon your head, not upon mine, be the sin."

CHAPTER IX

HERR WESENDONCK, in blissful ignorance that he was no longer in possession of the quota of favor formerly bestowed upon him by the Geddes household, dropped in unceremoniously one Sunday evening between five and six, and was invited as a matter of course to remain for supper.

It so happened that Professor Geddes had received a consignment of books that week, and had requisitioned Guido to help him catalogue them as a Sunday night relaxation—as Janet put it.

It was also Janet who whispered naughtily to Guido in the hall that, as Casimir had put in appearance, and was to grace their board that evening with his presence, the three-ring circus would once more be complete.

"Who's the second ring?" Guido demanded.

"Who's the first?" Janet flung back, whereat, in sheer joy of their nonsense and their whisperings which wore a doubly delightful edge owing to the exhilarating fear that—just possibly—they might be overheard, they indulged in such a coloratura of half-stifled sputterings of spasmodic laughter as only youth can produce. They were interrupted by the maid, dispatched by Mrs. Geddes, to tell them that the supper was a warm one and must not be kept waiting.

The maid had instructions to deliver this message in a voice loud, but not stentorian, at the junction of dining-room and hall, whence her words were bound to penetrate to the Professor's sanctum.

The Professor had a habit, exasperating to his wife in the extreme, of piloting their guests into his study just before dinner or supper, and there engaging them in a conversation which, strictly speaking, was not a conversation at all but a monologue. The Professor, usually a most considerate man in his choices of topics, allowed himself a

remarkable latitude in the selection of these ante-dinner subjects which seemed to serve him as a sort of mental cocktail, although it is doubtful whether his guests regarded them in so rosy a light.

"The Herbs used for Embalming Mummies in Ancient Egypt," was one of the Professor's favorite themes upon these occasions. Another was: "The Kilns in use in Assyria during the reign of Sardanapalus"; arid subjects perhaps, but also, through the allied subjects upon which they touch, such as religion, religious and social customs, architecture and sculpture, subjects which are not easily exhausted, and therefore it became necessary to summon the Professor repeatedly at such times and to all but use force in bringing him to the table.

Mrs. Geddes did her husband an injustice on this occasion in believing him guilty of one of his interminable impromptu lectures. The Professor had lured Wesendonck to his sanctum for the purpose of requesting his guest to refrain from discussing the War in his father's presence, as Grossvater Geddes latterly, when the War was broached, had shown a pitch of excitement which greatly alarmed those who loved him.

The Professor's precaution was superfluous, for Grossvater Geddes did not come down to supper, the maid explaining to Mrs. Geddes in an undertone, that old Mr. Geddes was very tired after his walk, and wished to take a good nap before eating. A couple of sandwiches and a cup of hot tea would be all he wanted a little later on.

The stop-cock which was to shut off Wesendonck's flood-tide of war-eloquence being thus opened, that gentleman took his favorite topic like a gosling to water. Guido, hoping to stay his deluge of words by showing a conciliatory spirit, said:

"There is one thing we are doing which I hate. I wish we were not sending horses abroad for the battle-fields of France."

"Ha!" Wesendonck cried, exultingly, miscomprehending the point of Guido's remark, "the Allies are entirely welcome to all the horses they contrive to get across alive."

"What do you mean?" the Professor, Guido and Janet asked in one breath, for all the world like a lot of stage puppets.

"Germans are good chemists and poison is still on sale in New York," said Wesendonck, smiling with grim humor.

Janet and Guido exchanged glances. The Professor said "h'm," and Mrs. Geddes made a curious, fluttering sound.

Wesendonck, with gathering truculence, continued:

"England need not think that her perfidy is going to carry the day this time. Trouble is brewing for her in India." And he hinted darkly that there were present those who ultimately knew men who, right in New York, were fomenting a Hindu rebellion which, within a very few months, would secure self-government to India. Guido looked distinctly startled. He thought that Wesendonck referred to some of his own acquaintances, and his thoughts flew to Egon von Dammer, but before he could sound Wesendonck, that worthy had begun embroidering his theme by saying that India would not fail as the Boers had failed when, in the first year of the War, they had essayed to throw off the British yoke.

"I think you are attributing an undue importance to the Boer rebellion," said Professor Geddes. "It was not a movement of any magnitude. Some of the very men who fought England during the Boer war now stood by her and helped quell the rebellion."

Wesendonck flared up hideously.

"There are skunks in every camp," he said, "skunks who do not hesitate to perpetrate the worst infamy of which men can be capable—treachery to their own race."

This was pretty strong, and for the first time in his life Guido saw the Professor flush with anger. Before Professor Geddes could speak, however, Guido jumped into the breach, by saying, quickly:

"If you consider every man a skunk who happens to repudiate his own race, why are Germans so inordinately proud of their greatest apologist, the teutonized Englishman, Stewart Houston Chamberlain?"

Wesendonck snorted with fury. It was too bad to be caught in his own net like this.

"Perhaps you do not recall any of the remarkable sayings this particular 'skunk,' Herr Wesendonck," Guido continued, pleasantly, "so I hope Professor and Mrs. Geddes will not mind if I quote one of his most turgid passages

which I took the trouble to memorize the other day, hoping it might come in handy some day at a dinner party when the usual crop of small-talk and vaudeville jokes begins to wear thin."

Wesendonck's eyes were black with anger, but the Professor said, encouragingly:

"Go on, my lad. Mr. Wesendonck, I am sure, is as much interested as we are."

And Guido recited:

"Non-Teutons should never be expected to acquire the German spirit, which they would only pollute. Their proper rôle is rather to stand by, no doubt overawed and filled with admiration, but left without hope of being assimilated. Shakespeare, Dante and Christ were virtual, unconscious Germans."*

"Is it a joke?" Mrs. Geddes inquired, in a transparently obtuse tone.

"No," said Guido, "he actually wrote just that and a lot more of the same sort of stuff."

"He appreciated us," said Wesendonck, with a pomposity which seriously threatened to undermine Janet's dignity.

"Well," said the Professor, "he had no business to appreciate you, did he? For, being a miserable Britisher, it branded him twice over a 'skunk.'"

Wesendonck gulped down a glass of water at one draught.

"The trouble with Germany is simply this," Guido continued. "She is sick unto death with envy, and hatred and greed, all the emotions, in brief, which may be classed together as sentimental refuse. Her system is all clogged up. If Germany were a human being instead of a nation she would be down with typhoid fever. Being a nation, she is making a holy show of herself."

"I clipped some verses the other day from a German paper which were protested against by the 'Vorwaerts' which, together with Maximilian Harden's 'Zukunft' seems to have kept pretty level-headed throughout this deluge of blood and slaughter."

*This translation is taken from the *Literary Digest*.

Drawing a wallet from his pocket, Guido extracted a newspaper clipping. Unfolding it, he read aloud:

"England! England! In our eyes
Mother of all monstrous lies.
What lust of cheating lives in thee
Thus to cheat the gallows tree.

"Let the Servians go serve in Hell.
The villains fall on every hand.
What joy for our dear Fatherland.

"In vain the dirty dogs for pardon pray.
A stab or a shot is all they get to-day.
When in their blood they welter one and all,
'More blood, more blood!' To God our voices call.*

"Pretty, isn't it?" Guido inquired, addressing himself to Wesendonck.

"It's not fair to judge the entire German nation by trash like that," Wesendonck commented.

"Trash!" cried the Professor. "Can any German write trash? You surprise me."

These ejaculations were made by the Professor with such whimsical good-nature that even Wesendonck joined in the smile that went around the table.

The doughty Wesendonck, nothing dismayed, next drew the talk to the case of Edith Cavell. This conversation took place early in December, and details concerning the cold-blooded ferocity with which the English nurse had been done to death had just begun to be published on this side of the Atlantic.

Professor Geddes interrupted his guest.

"You must pardon my interruption, Herr Wesendonck," he said, "but I think we had better not touch upon that tragedy. Every person at this table, excepting yourself, feels the death of that heroic woman as a personal loss."

"But why should you?" Wesendonck cried in utter sincerity. "None of you were related to her? You never met her? She is not even an American!"

* The English version of these verses appeared in the *Literary Digest*, May 13, 1916.

"Well, you see," said Mrs. Geddes, in her fluttering, disjointed way, "we are just simple folks—full of mawkish sentimentality—where we admire, we love, and where we love we sorrow when evil befalls. Very bad plan, that sort of thing, but then you know 'dollar-chasing' America is always the first to chase her dollars to any part of the earth where they may be required by those in suffering and in sorrow."

Wesendonck was silenced at last. The battle having gone against him so ingloriously, he took his departure at an early hour. With the firebrand safely out of the house, Mrs. Geddes was preparing to ascend to Grossvater Geddes' room to see if he required anything, when the old man's uncertain, shambling footstep was heard coming down the stairs. Janet rose to greet him, and held the portieres aside for him. He did not enter at once, and it was noted by all that he made a charming picture as he stood there framed by the archway of the door.

He wore a white silk waistcoat which Janet had embroidered for him; his house jacket and skull cap, from beneath which peeped a deep fringe of his snowy hair, were of pearl-gray velvet. As always, when indoors, he wore his patent leather pumps upon which twinkled buckles of cut steel. His blue eyes were preternaturally bright, and upon his cheeks was a hectic flush. He looked very frail, and dainty and lovable—very much as if he had stepped out of the frame of one of his own old pastel paintings, and Janet, who adored her grandfather, lifted the old man's hand to her lips and kissed it.

"Have you had a nice little cat-nap, dear *Grossvater*?" she asked.

"My child." Before answering Janet's question, he took her head between his hands and kissed her on the brow.

"I do not sleep very well at night these days," he said, "that is why I find it necessary to rest at intervals during the day."

He stepped into the room at last. Declining the chair which Guido offered him with a gesture of the hand, he began slowly pacing the floor with his hands upon his back. Whenever he spoke he stopped walking, placing the period to his sentence by renewed locomotion.

"So many terrible things are happening," he said. "This

torpedoing of vessels, the *Lusitania*, the *Arabic*, the *Hesperian*—and the false promises which the Germans make, and have no intention of keeping—it is all so terrible, so very, very terrible. There seems to be no infamy at which the Germans will stop. And Austria, too. To think that the accredited representative of a great nation should plot and conspire against property belonging to the nation to which he is accredited, like a common criminal, as Dumba has done and as von Bernstorff may be doing even now! And now this Cavell murder—infamous, infamous.”

“*Grossvater*,” said Mrs. Geddes, rising and affectionately putting her hand around his shoulder, “are you not exciting yourself too much? Why think so much about these dreadful things which none of us have power to avert?”

“My dear, my dear,” the old man patted his daughter-in-law’s hand, appreciatively, “let me talk. My heart is full to overflowing.”

He paused, then exclaimed in a voice strident with pain:

“It is the shame, the burning, excoriating shame of it! Such faith I had in my own people. God is my witness that I have given full allegiance to the country of my adoption, that I have loved not only the country but the men and women who people it, the people who make and enjoy and uphold the principles for which America is world-famous. But until this dreadful War began, I had faith also in the race from which I sprang. I thought, ‘As a race, they are a little slow and heavy to realize what constitutes political liberty, and that is why the people did not support the men who would have given them political self-respect in 1848.’ And I attributed this political dullness and slowness and immaturity to the modest tastes, the simple frugality, the ability to idealize all things which in my day characterized the average German, and which made of the time-hallowed German tradition of simple living and high thinking an almost religious principle which was observed in most homes as a matter of course.

“It seems to me now that I have been utterly mistaken. The German indifference to constitutional government arises from a different, a less flattering cause. It is due to an incapacity to comprehend political and racial equality as we, who are Americans, understand it. To the German mind, there must be an upper and an under dog. Hence

the quasi-idolatry with which the military caste is treated in Germany by the people at large, an attitude of mind which has not been forced upon them—for an attitude of mind cannot be artificially engendered—but which has evolved as the tangible parallel of a psychological disability. The free, human intercourse of good fellowship as it exists in democratic countries is not merely unknown but incomprehensible to the average German, for he cannot rid himself of the idea of upper and lower. It is natural to his mind that some should fawn and cringe and some should bully. And this perverted principle they think essential to the conduct of life. Incomprehensible as it must be to us, the German who cringes feels himself flattered in the spectacle of the man who accepts his servility as his due—a curious phenomenon, which may be explained by the German talent of idealization run wild, so that the man who cringes may for the moment project his own sensations to the personality of the master upon whom he fawns, so that himself, poor underling that he is, vicariously enjoys the pleasure of being toadied to by himself!

“And this pernicious mental habit has gradually, fattening on itself, expanded so far as to overlap the confines of the state. What is true as between man and man within the state, must be true as between state and state and race and race. Their madness in shouting themselves hoarse about their much-vaunted *Kultur*, which they would like to impose upon all the world, is the direct outcome of this hare-brained principle. It is more than that. The pressure exerted by the growing democratic tendencies of the world at large upon the German state, by the simple law of reaction to environment, must have exerted some modifying influence upon the German mind. But they have prospered so mightily in the career of pillage and plunder on which Germany embarked under Bismarck’s sinister leadership, that they hesitate to make any violent changes in their internal edifice. But the impetus toward democracy can no longer be wholly gainsaid. In the insensate, irrational cultus of their *Kultur*, they have at hand an excellent means of satisfying the growing democratic tendency. Furthermore, by making every German, merely by virtue of being a German, a creature superior to the miserable wretches who have emanated from the loins of

other races, both the old and the new currents of German national life can be satisfied. The old tendency, very self-evidently, is upheld by the supremacy of German *Kultur* to the *Kultur* of all other races. The new—the democratic—tendency, is satisfied by it because in thus exalting everything German, it theoretically places all things and all persons German upon the same level.

"The German mind is diseased. Are the Allies strong enough to administer the necessary purgation? Nothing short of the most crushing defeat of all history will purge Germany. You cannot convert a professional robber merely by taking away from him the spoils of his latest escapade, or by sending him to jail for a year or two. If you desire really to reform him, and not merely to render him innocuous, you must take far more drastic measures; you must reach down to the very roots of his being; you must knead over his moral nature.

"Can this be done for Germany? God only knows. I shall not live to see this regeneration. My faith in my own race is entirely shattered. Germany is to-day the Judas Iscariot among nations. Her infamy transcends the power of words.

"I repudiate my own race. I repudiate it utterly. I am through with it. I believe that the canker has eaten so far into Germany's marrow that nothing but a total disintegration, and then a reintegration along new lines can lead to her regeneration. But I am no longer interested in her regeneration. Like the rest of the civilized world, I am merely interested in seeing the outlaw, the bandit, the Judas curbed, checkmated, punished and unfanged."

The old man trembled from head to foot. Janet went and stood beside him, protectively. But the dignity and the pathos of a supreme sorrow which clung to him like a tangible robe restrained her from putting her arms about him.

Suddenly a dry sob rattled in Grossvater Geddes' throat. He held up his thin hand as if forbidding any expression of compassion or sympathy, and walked quietly from the room.

For a few moments all were silent. The scene had been an intensely dramatic one, and it left them all deeply

stirred. Mrs. Geddes was the first to speak. She said, in a matter-of-fact tone which sounded a little forced:

"Janet, you never fail to cheer your grandfather. He has had no supper. Go to the kitchen, my dear, and make him some hot tea, and take him that and the chicken sandwiches which I left for him on the dining-room table."

Janet obeyed her mother. Five minutes later she passed the parlor door with her tray and the steaming tea. She smiled cheerily at them all over the banister on her way upstairs. Less than two minutes later she was standing among them, white as death, trembling violently from head to foot.

"Oh, Mother! Oh, Father!"

There was no need to ask questions, no need to demand an explanation. They all knew what had happened even before Janet told them. Grief, excitement and shame had killed Grossvater Geddes. The old *Achtundvierziger's* heart had been broken by the turpitudes of his own race.

CHAPTER X

THE infinite diversity which exists between different minds was, in Guido's estimation, admirably evidenced by the effect of the war in its progressive stages upon his various friends. It had required the evidence of his own eyes to convert Otto. Dr. Erdman, although he disapproved of the sinking of hospital ships, justified the Germans "technically" on the ground that the English were using their hospital ships as transports; and in the main continued to cling to his belief in the fundamental justice of the German cause.

One evening, shortly after the death of Grossvater Geddes, Dr. Erdman and his wife called upon Frau Ursula.

✓ "Well," said Dr. Erdman, "my wife is leading me here in triumph, for know, I am the latest convert to the Allied Cause."

His conversion, it appeared, was directly due to the Cavell tragedy.

"I want to say right here," Dr. Erdman said, "that although I defended the sinking of the *Lusitania* on technical grounds, my gorge rose at thought of it. In the Cavell case, also, they may have had some semblance of technical right on their side, probably did have, since the German Military Code expressly provides the death penalty for the crime of which she is accused: '*Dem Feinde Mannschaften zuzufuehren.*' But one cannot help feeling that the German Military Governor should have taken into account a number of facts which do not even seem to have occurred to him. First of all the defendant was a woman. She had devoted virtually her entire adult life to the noblest profession which anyone can embrace, and, while discharging the duties of her profession she had nursed many German soldiers back to health, giving them the identical care which she bestowed on her compatriots. All this

counted for nothing with the German blood-hounds. Von Lencken seems to have been a sort of human mastiff, a human animal completely destitute of bowels, knowing no religion but that of brute force. Harrach embellished his brutality with cynicism. Think of the utter depravity of a mind which could give vent to Harrach's wish that he had three or four 'more *old* Englishwomen to execute!' As a physician I can tell you that a neurologist who has specialized in sexual cases could write an entire volume on the significance of that ejaculation, with the prominence it gives to that little three-lettered adjective.

"What I wanted to exclaim when I read that particular thing was 'Unclean, unclean!'"

"Good for you, Doc," said Guido, shaking Dr. Erdman by the hand. "I'd all but given you up as a hopeless case."

"I have not loved England in the past and I am afraid I shall not love her in the future, as I ought to do now that I have turned my back on the German cause," the doctor continued, warming to his subject. "But a sense of common justice forces me to juxtapose to this new inhumane act on the part of the Germans the clemency shown by the English to a woman who was recently sentenced in the English courts. Mrs. Louise Herbert was a native of Germany, but through marriage to an Englishman had become a British subject. For a long time she succeeded in sending news to the German Military Authorities concerning the output of certain ammunition plants, and the location of the storage houses where the finished product was held, subject to shipment to the Front. The Court found her guilty, but the Judge commuted the death sentence to imprisonment for a comparatively short time, *because she was a woman!*

"Yet this woman's crime was a military crime in the true sense of the word, for it was espionage. While Miss Cavell's crime consisted in helping a few convalescent English lads to get home in order to save them from the horror of the German prison camps.

"No! I am through with Germany. She may have had cause for going to war originally; and she may be technically right in drowning non-combatants and executing women; but there is a higher law than technical soundness,

and judged by that law Germany has declined to a deplorable level."

"Talking of being 'technically' right or wrong," Guido remarked, "has it ever occurred to you, Doc, that in the technical sense we were wrong both in the Revolution and in the Civil War?"

"How do you make that out?" Dr. Erdman inquired. "You are not going to justify either slavery or taxation without representation, I hope."

"We'll take the Revolution first," said Guido. "The greater part of England at the time of the Revolution was taxed without any or without adequate representation. The system of Rotten Boroughs was in vogue in England until the middle of last century, so that the American Colonies were not one whit worse off than many large English cities, which had less votes in 1776 than some rural districts with less than one-thousandth of their population."

"As to the Civil War, although Lincoln again and again expressly stated that his one object was to save the Union, he had in his young days, justified secession when he said, 'Any people anywhere, being inclined and having the power, have a right to rise up and shake off existing government, and form a new one that suits them better.' This is a most valuable, a most sacred right, which we believe and hope is to liberate the world. Nor is this right confined to cases in which the whole people of an existing government may choose to exercise it. Any portion of a people that can, may revolutionize, and make their *own* of so much of their territory as they inhabit."

"All of which proves," Guido concluded, "that technicalities mean nothing when a great human principle, a democratic principle, is at stake."

"Well," said Dr. Erdman, "I suggest we have a game of chess and forget all about the War for a little while."

But although there were now many converts to the Cause of Humanity and Decency, the majority of German-Americans evinced an ever-increasing hostility to the Allies.

Otto, that pugnacious and magnanimous convert, wrote brief and pithy letters from his training camp in Canada. He liked the life in the open. It was bully fine. The

officers were nice, clean fellows, from whom it was a pleasure to take orders. Their squad was doing fine, and they hoped to be sent "over there" by February, latest by spring. He had had no difficulty whatever in passing as a Canadian. There were a lot of German Canadians in that part of the country, and no one seemed to take umbrage at his antecedents. So he had not even changed his name to Gardiner, as he had first thought of doing. He was mighty glad he had gone up to Canada to enlist instead of trying the game in England. He thought there might have been some unpleasantness waiting for him in an English camp. Although, of course, he could not be certain. But by no chance could the British Tommy be as fine a fellow as his Canadian cousin, of that he was sure. If the English were cousins to the Americans, the Canadians might be said to be double cousins, meaning thereby first cousins both by the father's and the mother's side.

Otto's letters aroused Guido's ambition to turn aviator anew. Stan, unexpectedly, gained his father's consent to drive an ambulance in France, and went off to camp right after Christmas. Dobronov was reading every book he could lay hold of concerning the Society of Friends, and had eschewed poverty. He had sublet his palatial apartment on the Drive, and had gone to Paterson, N. J., to live, where he had bought him two or three little silk mills to occupy the time he could spare from his reading. His religious fervor, which nothing could abate, having been thrown out of its accustomed channel by the unexpected termination of his quest, was forced to carve out for itself a new path. Guido could see from Dobronov's letters that Sergius Ivanovich was throwing himself heart and soul into schemes for the betterment of living conditions among his factory workers. Apparently he was taking kindly to the Quaker doctrine that prosperity is neither a sin nor a crime.

So engrossed was Dobronov by his tasks that he had little time to spare for visiting. He rarely came to Anasquoit, and when he came he paid flying visits only.

Guido was a little surprised at this transformation of Dobronov from a dreamer to a man of affairs, but concluded finally that the change was not so much a trans-

formation as a translation from potential to kinetic energy. The vigor—often misunderstood—with which Dobronov had pursued his quest, was a token of his tremendous latent powers.

Mrs. Geddes, whose health had been impaired by Cecil's death, was further weakened by the sudden and dramatic close of Grossvater Geddes' life. Early in January she and Janet went south for the balance of the winter. Frau Ursula invited Professor Geddes to stay with herself and Guido while his family were away, but he was wedded to his books as much as to his wife—as Janet had often said in happier and more flippant days—and he preferred to remain in his own home. But he consented willingly to come and dine twice a week with Frau Ursula and Guido.

Thus, within a brief two months, Guido was deprived of the companionship of almost all of his young friends. There remained Al Dalton, who was an intellectual feather-weight; Eddie Erdman, of whom Guido saw as little as possible because he continued to be violently pro-German; Henry Foerster, whose pro-Germanism added vituperation to vehemence; Egon, whom Guido had virtually crossed off his list of friends; Elschen, whom he saw only when they met by chance—and forgot as soon as she was out of sight. Frau Ursula had the young girl in for dinner a few times a week, on days when her father was out of town delivering addresses in other churches. The project of making a match between her boy and Elschen was dearer than ever to Frau Ursula, and she hoped that propinquity might be the best match-maker.

After the usual exchange of pleasantries required by the free-masonry of youth, Guido, on such evenings, would address himself almost exclusively to his mother for the simple reason that he never knew very well what to talk about to Elschen. Elschen took this somewhat cavalier behavior as a token that he felt completely at home with her. It never dawned on the poor child that Guido ignored her because her mentality was of too neutral a hue to present points of intellectual contact; she thought that he was paying her the supreme compliment of feeling that although she was present he was still *en famille*.

There remained to Guido only one friend of his own

age from whose society he derived pleasure and benefit, and that was Tada Yomanato.

For a long time no real intimacy and friendship had sprung up between Guido and the Japanese owing to the continual pressure which Otto and Stan brought to bear on both the young men. Stan, being a Californian, on principle hated all things Japanese; Otto, in the days preceding his conversion, hated Yomanato because to hate the Japanese was part of the German creed. Neither, it is true, went as far as Wesendonck, who called the Japanese *schlitzaugige Affen* (slit-eyed apes), or as Egon von Dammer, who predicted that Japan was only biding her time to stab America in the back, adding that it would have been worth America's while, for that reason alone, not to antagonize Germany, for without Germany's aid, America, incompetent and untrained militarily, was bound, of course, to go to the wall.

Yomanato, with the sensitiveness of the Oriental for fine shades, had been keenly conscious throughout the year that all of Guido's friends disapproved of himself because of his race, and realized that this disapproval was shifted from the general to the particular whenever Guido made especial efforts to draw closer to himself.

Yomanato, foreseeing friction of an unpleasant character, which was the last thing he desired, therefore, with Oriental diplomacy, contrived to avoid Guido without making the avoidance seem marked, and upon such occasions when Guido invited him to his home, regretfully declined the invitations, invariably giving excellent and credible reasons for declining.

Guido's transparency was such that he was well-nigh incapable of disbelieving a friend even to the trifling extent of imputing to him the capacity for evolving a conventional lie. It did not dawn on him that Yomanato was purposely avoiding him. After Stan went to camp and Otto to Europe, Guido redoubled his efforts to see more of Yomanato, and now, quite suddenly, Yomanato's hitherto pressing engagements had thinned out sufficiently to permit him to renew and cement his friendship with Guido.

Guido had a curious power of attracting friends the most opposite in character and temperament. His talent for friendship had a wide range. Dobronov, Otto, Cecil,

Stan, Eddie, Henry and—in former days—Egon, varied one from the other as greatly as possible. But, greatly as they differed in other respects, one quality all of his friends, with the exception of Egon, had in common. All were direct, candid to a fault and as transparent as himself.

Yet whatever other admirable traits Yomanato possessed, he was the very antithesis of candid. Under his smiling, well-bred exterior lay a cast-iron wall of reticence such as Guido had never encountered before. It was not that he was deliberately mysterious or inscrutable—far from it. Apparently he was as candid as Guido himself. He was discursive, he was communicative, and it was only after almost two months of close companionship with Yomanato that it dawned on Guido one day how very little his Japanese friend had told him of himself. The two young men had spent evening after evening together, yet Yomanato had never told Guido anything about his affairs, had never spoken of any member of his family, had never, in brief, made any of those intimate but inconsequential confidences which arise quite naturally in the course of the most ordinary conversation.

Yet the evenings spent with Yomanato had been superlatively pleasant. They had been restful, and at the same time stimulating. Yomanato had initiated Guido in the beauties of the *samisen*, an instrument something like a guitar, for which Yomanato had much affection but little talent. For hours also they played *gomoku-narobe*, or, in plain English, go-bang. For hours, also, and most frequently this was their pastime, they discussed the relative merits of Christianity and Buddhism.

One evening, in the course of one of these religious discussions, Guido was destined to learn more of his friend than he had yet known, nor did he wonder, after hearing Yomanato's story, that the Japanese had not taken him into his confidence before. Indeed, so distressing and incredible was Yomanato's story to Western ears and Western ideas that not only did Guido not wonder that the tale had not been told before but marveled at Yomanato's stoicism in telling it at all.

In discussing Buddhism that evening Yomanato mentioned that he practiced ancestor-worship in conformity with Shinto.

"I am afraid I shall never be able to comprehend how you can be a follower of two religions," said Guido.

"It is really very simple," Yomanato replied, smiling broadly. "And it amounts to the same thing. At the time when Buddhism was introduced to Japan, no provision was made for ancestor-worship in any form. It was as a concession to the sociological development and needs of the Japanese that ancestor-worship was included in the Buddhist ritual. My mother was saturated with the spirit of old Japan—with *Yomato-damashi*—and clung to the religion of by-gone days—Shinto. My father was a progressive, highly educated man, and, following the male line of his ancestors, was a Buddhist. By conviction I am a Buddhist, like my father; but sentiment for my sainted mother impels me to continue the old Shinto rites."

"But do the Shinto rites not conflict in any way with your Buddhistic beliefs?"

"Do rites make a religion?" Yomanato parried. "Does faith in one religion necessarily preclude faith in another?"

Guido laughed, uncomfortably.

"Well, I could not be both a Christian and a Buddhist," he said. "I am quite sure of that. And I never will understand how you can have two religions. It seems to me that one religion, like one wife, is all an honest man can possess."

Yomanato smiled his baffling smile.

"You say you could not be both Christian and Buddhist," he said. "But then, my friend, forgive me, you are neither. I have heard at least of one Buddhist in Japan who embraced Christianity as well; and it was part of the ancient Jesuit policy in China to allow the Chinese to practice their ancestor-worship along with the Christian rites."

"The Jesuits!" Guido exclaimed, in a contempt which, if he had but known it, was wholly Protestant.

"The Jesuits were very wise men," Yomanato retorted, smiling.

"But," Guido continued, "authors who compare the two religions always represent them as being more or less antagonistic."

"Authors!" Yomanato exclaimed with something of

Guido's former intonation. Whereat both young men laughed.

"Do not be afraid to think for yourself, von Estritz," said Yomanato.

"Well, taking your own case," Guido began, and then stopped abruptly, feeling that he had been about to infringe upon the rules of courtesy observed so rigidly by his friend.

"Pray, go on," said Yomanato, "you have no idea how stimulating this conversation is to me."

"I fear to give you offense," Guido said, frankly.

For the first time since he had known Yomanato, it seemed to Guido that the habitual reticence of the Japanese, which clung to him like a veil, was rent asunder. He stood face to face at last with a human soul like his own.

"Do not fear to offend me," Yomanato said, with a certain noble simplicity. "Let us speak openly, without fear of giving umbrage. If the East and the West are ever to meet in candid friendship, it can only be through comprehending each other, and in what way can comprehension be compassed save by frankness in speech? Unless, indeed, we believe with Talleyrand that words were invented to hide thought."

"Well, whatever I am, I am not a disciple of Talleyrand," Guido responded, "and with all my heart, Yomanato, I will be frank with you."

"Begin, then, by asking your question."

"This was what I wanted to ask," said Guido. "Do you practice Shinto ancestor-worship, which as you say you adhere to in memory of your mother, while actually disbelieving in the ancestral cult?"

Yomanato did not reply at once.

"Do not think," he said, finally, "that I am trying to evade your question, but it is difficult to answer. I have already told you that Buddhism in China and Japan provides for ancestor-worship. So that it really does not matter whether I follow the older—the Shinto—rites, instead of the newer—the Buddhist—rites? *Mitamaya* or *Bud Sudan*, *mitamashiro* or *ihai*, what does it matter? What does it matter whether I repeat the Shinto prayers for the dead, or say the *Nembutsu* (*Namu Amida Butsu*)? It amounts to the same thing in the end. And as to believing or disbelieving in ancestor-worship, I am a little

at sea in trying to draw a hard and fast line between belief and disbelief in a matter of this sort. Say I do not believe in precisely the same way that my Shinto ancestors believed in the ancestral cult. What does it matter? The simple rite which I practice every evening is sacred and dear to me as constituting a sort of communion with those whom I loved and who are no longer with me. None of us can be sure—no matter what we *believe*—concerning the hereafter. If the disembodied spirits of those who have gone before should retain some of the affections and emotional bonds and spiritual affiliations which characterized their life on earth, consider, my friend, how sore a trial it would be to be denied the poor comfort of knowing that a few minutes each day are set aside for the express purpose of communing with them.

"It may seem puerile and childish to you, but while there is breath in this body I will continue to make evening offerings and say my ancestral prayers."

"That is very beautiful, of course," Guido said, hastily. He was moved by the unsuspected well of sentiment and affection disclosed by Yomanato's words. "I was under the impression that Buddhism teaches that the soul after death is absorbed by the Absolute. That is why I wondered that, being a Buddhist, you continued your Shinto rites."

"In homes where the Buddhist rite is followed the deceased are included in the evening rites only for a hundred years, this being the period supposed to elapse between what is vulgarly called reincarnations."

"Why do you say 'what is vulgarly called reincarnations?'"

"Because the higher Buddhism, of course, does not countenance the belief in 'incarnations' because the word presupposes a continuance of personality. And personality, as the Occidental understands it, is denied by Buddhism. Karma persists. Our actions, conduct, thoughts while on earth in this—well, incarnation, you see how difficult it is even for a Buddhist to get along without the word—make Karma—make the robe, as it were, which is to cover and envelop a future existence."

Guido's perplexity grew. In spite of Yomanato's promised indulgence, he feared to offend by further pressing

his point. Yomanato, however, guessed his friend's bewilderment.

"Why do you hesitate to ask me what you wish to ask?" he said. "Have we not promised to be mutually candid and frank?"

"Very well," said Guido. "Should my questions become troublesome, or impertinent, you must tell me frankly. Is there anything to Shinto besides Ancestor-worship?"

"Oh, yes! My mother's people were Shinto followers and very, very devout. My great-great-grandfather was several times chosen as *ichi-nen-gannushi*—one year god-master—for the community in which he lived. As such it was his duty to devote himself entirely to religious observances for one year for the sake of the community. There are very many prayers, religious rites and renunciations to be observed in Shinto. In Shinto a misfortune or sickness is the direct consequence of wrong-doing, so that if and public misfortune befalls the community, the *ichi-nen-gannushi* is put to death. It is therefore quite hazardous, as well as a great honor, to be a god-master. The little town in which my mother's people lived, flourished so markedly whenever my grandfather was the incumbent of this religious office that he was elected to it again and again."

Guido said nothing, but his interest shone from his eyes.

"I see," Yomanato said, smiling, "that you wish to know whether I believe in this particular teaching of Shinto or not. Well, I do and I don't. It was an English—not a Japanese—poet, who said:

"' . . . More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of . . . '

On the whole, of course, I accept the Buddhist doctrine that evil and virtuous acts and thoughts in this life form the tendencies, the Karma, in which future lives will move and have their being. But is it not possible that mercifully we are allowed to expiate on earth for some of the evil done, so that much of the consequences of our evil-doing which would otherwise be embodied as Karma, is deleted from the future? And, if this is so, then prayer, renunciations, expiations may help us more than we know.

"There are in religion so many vapory possibilities, so

many speculations which lead hither and thither, which impinge one on the other and sometimes unexpectedly unify seemingly hostile thoughts, that I have learned to discard no religious belief or doctrine without regarding it from every angle and testing its every capability.

"Ah!" cried Guido, "those are very wonderful thoughts, Yomanato." He was beginning to feel considerably more respect for this odd religion called Shinto than he would at first have thought possible.

Thus encouraged, Yomanato resumed. He showed enthusiasm, a rare thing for him if not to feel at least to manifest.

"My mother," he said, "in spite of her unwavering belief in this very old and admittedly quaint religion, was not a narrow-minded woman. When my brother or myself were naughty, she did not apply the painful moxa to our flesh which some mothers apply, hoping, by this extraneous chastisement to ward off sickness, but by withholding from us some toy or sweetmeat which we coveted. Nor did she apply the moxa to us when ill; for she held that as we had invariably been punished when naughty, there was no further debit for naughtiness to be charged against our account. Very wisely, when any one of us was ill, she sent for the medical missionary in the American colony. Just how she reconciled her belief in the doctor, which was always vindicated, with the doctrine of her religion which teaches that illness is a direct result of wrong-doing, I do not know. Europeans and Americans came frequently to our house, and from them as well as from my father I think my mother had learned a good deal about germs and infections and contagions and serums.

"Nevertheless, in spite of this seeming contradiction, my mother was very strict with my brother and myself in regard to the rite of purification. Every six months the great rite of lustration is performed at the Shinto temple and in every Shinto home." And he explained to Guido that the outward token of lustration consisted in writing one's age and sex upon a little shape of a man—or a woman—cut out of paper, which are furnished by the local Shinto priest. These are returned to the temple, where they are burned.

"And to this rite," Yomanato said, "I have always ad-

hered, so long as I was in Japan. Odd as it may seem to you."

"And do you really believe that you are purified by conforming with this practice?"

"I believe that if I seriously review my life for the past six months, before placing my age and my sex upon the *hitogata*, it will help me to overcome in the future errors and faults similar to those which I have committed in the past."

"There's a good deal in that," Guido admitted. This explanation made a deep impression upon him. It taught him to search deep for the moral purpose which underlies religious practices, many of which, excepting to the intelligently initiated, seem futile or even foolish.

"One more question," said Guido, "and then I will desist. Is *harikiri* still practiced, or is it an obsolete custom?"

A strange change came over Yomanato's features. He smiled broadly, but there was something uncanny in his smile. His features seemed to have become coated with a very delicate, insubstantial mask of extraordinary power, whose purpose was to mold his face in a perpetual, unnatural and eerie grin. Yomanato did not speak for the longest time, but sat there, nursing his hideous grin assiduously—so, at least, it seemed to Guido. And suddenly there occurred to Guido an explanation of this preposterous expression of would-be merriment, this mechanical exponent of a sentiment which had no counterpart at the moment in Yomanato's soul.

Yomanato was smiling because he wished to hide or was trying to suppress some painful recollection!

Presently the dreadful smile died away, and Yomanato's face became human again.

"*Seppuku* is now and has been forbidden by law for generations," he said.

"*Seppuku*?"

"*Seppuku* is the old *samurai* word for *harikiri*."

Guido's mobile face showed his surprise. So strongly entrenched is race prejudice and race pride in all that even in this boy, who had schooled himself from a child to conform in action and speech to his deep-rooted conviction that every race has its own peculiar mission to fulfill, and that all races, therefore, may be said to be equal, the

tremendous egoism of the white race persisted subconsciously to the extent of causing him a pang of violent surprise whenever some further evidence of Oriental versatility and culture came to his attention.

It had never occurred to him that the language of the Japanese might be a varied, versatile and rich repository reflecting the best traditions, customs, religious observances and social habits of a people whose entire national development has been singularly articulate and original.

Yomanato divined the cause of his surprise.

"You are surprised," he said, without showing even the mild amusement with which an Occidental would have registered his resentment of an unamiable reflection upon his own race, "to find that we have more than one name-word in Japanese for identical concepts." And he explained the remarkable wealth of the Japanese language, a wealth which is the utter despair of Western scholars. The caste spirit which pervaded Old Japan imposed upon each caste, humble and high alike, certain expressions of its own, and many of these forms have survived to the present era. The Mikado has quite a number of words for his own personal use, notably pronouns, to which none else may aspire. Equivalent for such simple words as husband, wife, son and daughter there are galore. The inflections and arrangements of verbs are conditioned not only to the caste of the speaker, but by the caste of the person addressed. Women, especially women of the *samurai* caste, use expressions which would seem unbecoming if used by their lords.

Guido listened in growing amazement.

"It must take years to acquire all the rules governing your language," he said, when Yomanato finally stopped speaking.

"It does," Yomanato replied, quietly.

"It is probable," he continued, "that in another generation or two, the old habits of speech will be completely abandoned excepting among the higher classes and in country provinces. There are so many things of greater importance for us to learn in these new days."

"Then you do not regret the coming of the new days?"

Yomanato looked at Guido with strangely expressive eyes.

"My one regret is," he said, "that the new days did not come earlier. We of Japan owe America a great debt, a greater debt than we can ever hope to pay. Our prayer and our hope is that she will remain our friend, and not allow herself to be influenced by those calamity howlers out West who would like to embroil their country with ours. I assure you, a more unpopular war than a war with America could not be imagined by a Japanese. You have taught us so much, and you have so much more to teach us. Yet I would not have you believe that the East can teach you nothing in return. There is one thing, we of the far East can teach you and must teach you if the course of world events is to fall out happily for the human race."

"And that is——" Guido asked.

"Religion."

"But we have a very excellent religion of our own," said Guido, experiencing the strange possessive feeling which swept over him whenever he thought that Christianity was being dealt with slightly.

"Yes, Christianity is an excellent religion," Yomanato assented, reflectively. "And I do not pretend to say whether it is the fault of your religion, or of your religious teachers, or of your people that has kept Christianity from permeating your life as our religion has permeated ours."

"Of which religion are you now speaking?" Guido demanded, a little superciliously. "Buddhism or Shinto?"

"Of either, of both. It really does not matter, my friend, in which religion we place our faith, so long as we practice Religion seven days a week and not merely on one day."

"I dare say that is true," Guido admitted, grudgingly.

Yomanato resumed.

"It was perhaps necessary for the welfare of the world that Nippon should have remained dormant as long as she did," he said, "for in that mental dormancy the religious spirit had time to completely interweave itself with our life. The East and Religion—I do not speak now of any fixed religious belief, but of religion in the abstract—have become indivisible, as you would be aware if you had ever lived in any Eastern country."

"Am I to infer," Guido asked, "that in your estimation the West is less religious than the East?"

Yomanato's soft dark eyes regarded Guido with a look of grieved gentleness.

"I cannot answer that question without committing a grave breach of courtesy," he said, "and therefore I will not and must not answer it. You must pardon me, my friend. All your other questions I have answered. This one only I cannot answer—not to-day. Nor to-morrow. Nor next year. Many years hence—perhaps."

"As you wish, of course," said Guido, none too politely. He had the grace to be ashamed almost immediately. If courtesy was love in little things, as Van Dyke indicated, then indeed did he, who was of the West, fall cruelly short of religion as compared with Yomanato, who was of the East.

Yomanato, ignoring Guido's unmannerliness, said:

"I would like to illustrate the meaning of what I said before concerning the interpenetration of life by Religion in the East, by referring to an incident which happened at the time when the anti-Japanese legislation in California came near disrupting the peace between the United States and Japan. Count Okuma, in addressing some representative Japanese and Americans in his own home made a remarkable statement in the course of his speech to the effect that questions so vital and far-reaching could not be settled by mere diplomacy or by law-making. One force, and one force only, he said, is great enough to deal successfully with such questions—Religion. I ask you, von Estritz, would any statesman of the Occident have ventured to express such a thought, even if it had occurred to him?"

"That, of course, was a very remarkable utterance," Guido admitted, this time out of the fullness of his heart. The last mainstay and prop of race prejudice had been finally undermined. Henceforth he would be willing to admit not merely the equality of the East and the West, but the superiority of the East in some matters of vital moment, which is only another way of alleging race equality, since even among the white races one race excels in one direction, another in another, and equality is not so much equality as counterbalancing of national superiorities. It stimulated his mind to new adventuresomeness in

attaching the problem which, clouded or unveiled, was ever present in his consciousness—the problem which concerned itself with the ultimate outcome of race admixture in the United States.

"And so," Yomanato resumed, "it was selfish of me to wish for personal reasons that our awakening to the material advantages of the civilization of the Occident should have occurred earlier than it did." He paused. Guido could see that he was full of his subject, and waited for him to resume. Suddenly Yomanato continued:

"I am going to tell you my story, not because I wish to enlist your sympathy but because, if the East and the West are ever to really comprehend each other, it is essential that we get each other's viewpoint. I want to say at the outset that I do not expect you to get in its entirety the Japanese view-point of what I am about to relate. But it will show you how hard old beliefs, old customs, traditions, superstitions if you will, die. It will show you how some of the old ideals—perverted as these ideals may seem to you and seem to me, also—persist, how, to our hurt, they reach into the pulsating present with the chill fingers of the past.

"My story is an unusual one—happily. It is, I venture to say, unique."

Yomanato paused. The telling of his story seemed to require a tremendous effort. Having nerved himself to this effort he told his story without a quiver of the lip, without a quaver of the voice, without a dilation of the eye.

Both of Yomanato's parents came of ancient and honorable lineage. His father was a man of scholarly attainments who rose to a high government office. His younger brother was the playfellow of the son of the man who, if the old order of things had prevailed, would have been the daimyo of the district. Together these two lads were instructed in modern knowledge and in ancient traditions as well. It was their great joy to play at old *samurai* customs, to pretend that the old feudal system was still in vogue, Yomanato's brother invariably playing the part of the retainer, little Kato Metsetsuma assuming the rôle of liege lord. Then, one day, there came a pestilence which swept away many hundreds of lives, little Kato being among the victims. Yomanato's younger brother implored

his parents to be permitted to gaze once more upon the face of his little friend. The parents went with him to the house of the Metsetsumas. For one brief moment Yomanato's young brother was left alone with the body of Kato Metsetsuma. When his parents re-entered the room to call him, they found that he had killed himself in the old *samurai* fashion. Out of loyalty to the lad with whom he had played at feudal customs, he had performed *junshi*—the term applied to harikiri which is prompted by the desire of a dependant or a friend to follow master or friend into the Great Beyond. The lad of ten had disemboweled himself in order not to let his playfellow make the Long Journey after death alone. And he had not allowed a single sound of pain to escape him in his death agony.

Barely half a year later Yomanato's father lent an all too willing ear to the representative of a foreign power, who offered to pay a princely sum for certain state documents in the elder Yomanato's possession. By chance his wife learned of the projected treason. She implored her husband to remain true to his trust and to his country. He paid no attention to her appeals. The heroic woman, bred in the old *samurai* traditions and mother of a son who, although a mere child, had not feared to end his own life when loyalty demanded it, as he thought, realized that there was one way only of making her husband understand the turpitude which he was about to commit. As a protest against her husband's falling away from virtue, Yomanato's mother performed *jigai*—the female equivalent of *seppuku*—which consists in cutting the throat with a dagger.

Yomanato's father was so moved by this token of his wife's keen sense of honor, that instead of closing the dishonest deal, he denounced the spy to the Japanese government, and then inflicted punishment upon himself for the tragedy of his wife's death by performing *seppuku*.

Thus almost an entire family immolated itself in rigid adherence to an outlived custom. Yomanato felt, justly, that if the old *samurai* traditions had been more remote, the threefold tragedy might not have been enacted.

"Although," he added, a glimmer of pride showing through his usual stoical exterior, "who can say but that it is not better so? Death is preferable to dishonor—and my father would have dishonored himself by dishonesty, if my

mother had not performed *jigai*. So I must say that it is better so."

There was an aftermath to this story. The excitement caused throughout Japan was intense. The grave of little Oda Yomanato had already been made the goal of many a pilgrimage. It was always piled high with flowers, and parents who desired to impress upon their children the sanctity of friendship traveled from afar in order to visit Oda's grave with their offspring. A similar eruption of faithful wives now threatened to invade the spot where Yomanato's mother lay buried. The local authorities saw themselves forced to interfere. And a local judge, fearing that admiration so unfeigned would result in imitation, decided to take time by the forelock, and, following the example of a shogun who had flourished in the seventeenth century, at a time when the Japanese authorities made the first concerted stand against the custom of suicide, had Yomanato arrested and sentenced to death, hoping by this harsh and unjust proceeding to restrain other children, wives and husbands from following the example set by the Yomanato family. In olden days it had been customary to punish the entire family of a transgressor of the law, but it was not the historical precedent so much as his inability to cope in any other way with the evil *seppuku*, which, if once revived, might sweep the land like an epidemic, that actuated the Judge in taking so drastic a measure.

"And how were you saved?" Guido inquired, breathless with interest.

Yomanato smiled.

"I argued it out with the Judge in open court," he said. "After the death sentence had been pronounced, I asked for the privilege of saying a few words. This, of course, was granted. I then addressed the Judge after this fashion. 'The August One,' I said, 'would punish me with death because my brother performed *junshi*, my mother *jigai*, my father *seppuku*. These are ancient customs which have justly been condemned as foolish or worse by the authority of the High and Honorable Ones. But if the High and Honorable Ones see fit to discard ancient customs so far as they conflict with modern good sound common sense, why should the August One who here dispenses justice fol-

low the ancient custom of punishing all surviving members of a family for the offense committed by one or more members of that family? I, indeed, am to be punished for the offenses of three of my family. Is this not cruel, unjust and unnatural? How can one back be required to bear the burden of three? I protest against my sentence the more so as I am the last of our blood. It would be necessary, therefore, before I die, to have an adopted scion assume the obligations of our ancestor-worship; and where, if you set the brand of infamy upon our house, shall a man be found to assume these functions, particularly as my father died penniless, and I therefore have nothing in the way of worldly aggrandizement to offer him who would consent to say the prayers for my noble mother and admirable brother, for noble they were, although they chose mistaken means of proving their nobility.

"I therefore beseech the August One to take these considerations seriously to heart before having sentence executed upon me, and exterminating our race. I beg him to remember the honorable record of my family and to consider that, once extinct, nothing can bring back to life the blood that has served Japan honorably for generations.

"To-day I am merely a descendant. To-morrow I may be an ancestor. That I plead for life after a tragedy which would have impelled the average man to follow in the footsteps of his parents and of his younger brother, should prove to you the strong sense of responsibility which I have as the sole remaining representative of our family.

"But, August One, be your judgment what it may, I bow to it in meekness and humbleness of spirit."

"Thus," Yomanato concluded did I entreat the judge. He pardoned me, commending me for my sense of responsibility to future generations. Metsetsuma then offered to adopt me as a son, in place of the son who had died and for whom my brother had sacrificed himself, but although the advantages of belonging to so rich a family were manifold, I declined the offer for the reasons which I had urged in pleading for my life. Metsetsuma was at first annoyed by my ruling, but in the end applauded it. It is to his generosity that I owe the educational advantages which I am now enjoying."

It was a stranger story than Guido had ever heard in



all his life. He was still too new to Japanese thought and life to feel anything but horror and repulsion at the fantastic notion of seeing in suicide not merely a justifiable, but a commendable and quasi-religious rite. He suppressed every evidence of the disgust with which this part of Yomanato's story filled him. He could but respect and admire Yomanato, who, for the sake of the common weal, as he conceived it, had bared his heart so completely to a stranger. Something there was in all this that was fine and splendid—the stoicism with which extreme physical pain was accepted, the willingness with which life was relinquished, the fine sense of honor, the courtly sense of loyalty, and the utter contempt for the material and the mundane. Here, certainly, was a finer motive for suicide than that which had driven little Ludolf von Dammer to his death.

Yomanato did not expect any expression of sympathy. Having made up his mind to trust Guido, he trusted him with a thoroughness and a completeness which filled Guido with shame and dismay as he remembered the patronizing attitude not untinctured with suspicion with which he had regarded the Japanese in the early days of their acquaintance.

Yomanato rose. He was about to give Guido a further proof of his friendship and esteem.

He beckoned Guido to follow him to an alcove, curtained off from the rest of the room by a heavy portiere which Guido had never seen drawn aside. The alcove was not large, and contained no furniture whatever. The only objects in the room were a very handsome Oriental rug, placed before a broad shelf secured against the wall. On the shelf stood a small model of a temple—a Shinto temple, as Yomanato explained presently. In front of it stood a tiny lamp, unlighted, a glass filled with orange juice and a plate of imported Japanese rice cakes of a kind with which Yomanato had frequently regaled Guido.

Yomanato indicated the tiny temple, which was exquisitely carved and appeared to be very old.

"That is the *mitamaya*," he said, "and it contains the *mitamashiro*—the mortuary tablets of my dead—and a scroll containing the names of our more remote ancestors."

They withdrew in silence.

It was late, and the two friends parted almost immediately after leaving the alcove, Guido thanking Yomanato for the confidence which he had shown him, and promising that in return he would, when occasion permitted, tell him his own story, a tale no less remarkable in its way.

They shook hands.

"*Sayonara*," said Yomanato, and Guido, giving back the Japanese parting in English, said, "If it must be."

That evening, in Yomanato's rooms, by a story of semi-feudal, semi-modern Japan, by the sight of a tiny model of a Shinto temple, by hearing repeated the utterances of a great world patriot, there was lighted a fire in Guido's soul which henceforth nothing could quench. It was destined to burn with an uncertain and a wavering flame for many years to come; to seek curiously torturous trails along which to blaze. But it was an unquenchable flame, and possessed of an enormous vitality. And, in the end, it was to endow life with a new and undreamed-of beauty, for the torch that was kindled in Guido's heart that evening was the torch of true, of undenominational religion. From being something necessary for the individual, religion had become something indispensable in human relationship. That was an enlargement of view of which Guido himself was the last to guess the entire import at the moment.

CHAPTER XI

MRS. GEDDES and Janet returned from the South on the first Saturday in March, the very day on which Guido received a card from Otto saying they were off at last for England, and he hoped they would be in France before April.

Mrs. Geddes was much improved in health and looked years younger; Janet was much changed and looked years older, which is the same as saying that for the first time she looked the nineteen years to which she owed. Janet possessed a rare single-mindedness regarding the theme of life, which she conceived very simply to be honesty and kindness, and a fine breadth of vision concerning its conduct, which she divined must be as comprehensive and richly varied as possible, two habits of mind which, when commingled, carry with them an elixir making for perpetual youth. Her girlhood had been unduly prolonged; she had worn none of those little superior airs with which the girl in her teens usually invests herself; clandestinely she still kept the last doll of her childhood tucked away in a drawer of her wardrobe, and she preferred to run a race or row a race with a boy to "mooning" about with them in the gloaming.

But her trip south had convinced her, most unkindly, that her romping days were over. She was spared the horror of long skirts since long skirts, fortunately for everybody, have gone out of the fashion. But the men whom she had met at the Southern hotel where she and her mother had stayed, would not allow her to forget that she was a young woman and not a child. They played tennis and golf with her; they rowed with her; they danced with her; they also murmured sweet nothings into her ear upon every possible occasion, and she learned the strange lesson that eloquence makes use of a myriad vehicles, and that the vehicle of written and spoken speech is only one of the many tongues of which eloquence can avail itself.

The eloquence of eyes, of pressure of fingers, of touch of hand—all these and many more she was made unwell-comely aware of during her southern trip.

But the men whom she met did not move her. She had given her heart, when little more than a child, to a boy of her own age, and the memory of Guido's dark eyes and glowing personality made her immune against the magic in which other and older men sought to ensnare her. She thought these older men silly, flirtatious, foolish, "mushy." In retrospection Guido's reserve, his candor, his downright honesty, his generous enthusiasm shone and sparkled for her as never before. All that the men who had been fascinated by the girl's beauty and wit had succeeded in accomplishing was a closer riveting of her affections and her esteem upon Guido.

Professor Geddes held her at arm's length in his amazement at the change that had taken place in her.

"And this is my little girl?" he asked, in comic bewilderment.

"This is your *big* girl," said Janet, laughing, but with a subtle emphasis which made him realize with a cruel pang that Janet was now indeed wholly and irrevocably a young woman.

Guido was struck silent by the change in his friend and playmate. He came into the room a little more quickly than usual, and shook hands first with Mrs. Geddes. The boyish smile with which he turned to greet Janet gave way to a look of intense surprise, and the surprise changed as quickly to an emotion for which as yet he had no name.

He was thrilled, so deeply and elementally thrilled that the pleasure which the sight of Janet's dear face gave him throbbed and tingled through him like electric vibrations. Nor could he have told just wherein the change in Janet consisted. He perceived at once that it was not a physical change. Face and figure were a little fuller, perhaps, than when they had parted, or rather, not fuller so much as more rounded. But there was an expression in her face, and in her eyes, which, he thought, had not been there before. There was about her something both lovely and regal, a sort of buoyant wholesomeness which made her really remarkable beauty seem the inevitable externalization of the exquisite qualities of her soul.

And she wore her youth like a precious jewel, neither vauntingly nor self-consciously, with an air of utter simplicity which proclaimed that it belonged to her and she to it.

The boy's breath came hard and fast. At first he could not speak, he was so deeply moved. Something of his silent rapture imparted itself to Janet. She had loved him so long, and he had, up to this moment, been so deliciously, stupidly oblivious to her young womanhood, that her triumph, now that it had come, was inexpressibly sweet.

She drank deep of the libations which his eyes were pouring out before her. Their eyes met, held each other in the joint ecstasy of love and youth, held each other in a gaze as intimate as an embrace, as fond as a caress.

Mrs. Geddes touched her husband's elbow and motioned to him to follow her from the room.

"Well," said Janet at last, "aren't you going to shake hands with me and tell me you are glad to see me?"

"Glad!" Guido echoed, and delicately touched Janet's outstretched hand with two fingers. She had, suddenly, become a creature too fine for the ordinary uses of life. To touch her hand with his own fingers, work-roughened from the practical work which the curriculum required him to do in the machine-shop, seemed a sort of sacrilege. She seemed to the boy in that infatuated moment of their first meeting after months like a denizen from another sphere. He was all flame and ice—mental flame and physical ice—by the law of his innate idealism. Later those conditions might be reversed. But for the moment the emotion with which she inspired him was adoration rather than love, glorification rather than passion.

They spoke of indifferent things. Indeed, all things, save only one, could not be but indifferent to them on this day of days. That one engrossing subject Guido was too much in awe of her fancied celestial quality to introduce, and she, being the weaker vessel, was forbidden by convention to broach.

The more was the pity! Much heart-burning, much needless pain—if pain be ever needless—would have been spared these two young creatures if Janet might in that day and in that hour have spoken of the love which she

knew was hovering between them, waiting, ah! so eagerly for a chance to alight in their hearts.

Another girl, by dint of innocent diplomacy, might have been mistress of the situation. But Janet had great sex-pride. Innocent affection and loyal friendship she had shown Guido right along. As for the rest she would not have gone one-sixteenth of an inch, not one sixteenth of a sixteenth of an inch out of her way to meet his declaration of love.

Their conversation ran something in this wise:

"You had a lovely time all winter, Janet?"

"Yes, very nice."

"Lots of young folks?"

"Lots."

"Dances?"

"Dances."

"Boating, fishing, bathing?"

"Yes, of course, all that sort of thing."

"Did you do any reading?"

"Reading?"

Janet was temperamentally incapable of continuing this inane word-banding. The first painful fluttering of the love-bird that was beating its wings so piteously against the walls of her heart, had died away. Humor was in the ascendant once more.

"Well," she replied, "I read all the letters I received—even yours."

"*Even* mine? Were mine so very bad?"

"Construe 'bad'."

"Stupid, of course."

"No," she said, pointedly, "your *letters* were by no means stupid." And added in thought, "Even if you are." She felt a sense of exasperation, such as poor woman, fettered and shackled to silence in the presence of unbelievable tongue-tiedness, or obtuseness, must ever feel.

"Why then *even* mine?"

"Well, your letters were an effort to read," she said, looking at him archly and fully conscious that she was ruthlessly taking advantage of his spiritual abasement.

"An effort? I am sorry."

"Don't be," said Janet. "Your letters had substance—I was lazy—I looked for airy nothings—but, truthfully, the



only mental discipline I had while away was the reading of your epistles. So you should feel proud."

Guido felt anything but proud. It was a barbed-wire sort of a compliment and it pricked him to right and to left as barbed wire has a habit of doing. She had accustomed him in the past to expect mischievous shafts, but this particular arrow was almost cruel. Janet saw that he was hurt and rejoiced—she thought it might awaken him to an appreciation of the possibilities of the situation.

But it didn't, because he felt no resentment, and he felt no resentment because to his dazed senses this new Janet seemed a creature compounded of sunlight and clean mountain air and the essence of a thousand flowers. Untruth, not even toy untruth, which is one of the favorite expediences of mischievousness, could habitate in the heart of a creature so divinely fashioned. Because she had intimated it, he would have made an affidavit then and there that his letters were dull, ponderous, entirely unfit for consumption by a delicate, fastidious maid. Love and paralyzed his sense of humor. It was unfortunate, twice, thrice, unfortunate that love did not force its way into the open but lay in ambush, like some shameful thing.

Love broke away from cover only after Guido had left Janet. Then it began to soar heavenward in joyous, self-unconscious exuberance. He wasted no time in wondering that she loved him. By a thousand tokens he knew that she did. He wondered a little at his blindness in not having noticed before both his love for her and her love for himself. He wanted to turn back, to return to Janet, to tell her of his love then and there. But his excitement was so great that he did not trust himself. He wanted to propose to her decently, prettily, with chivalrous courtesy. He did not want to make a fool of himself. He had played the fool long enough.

Now one of the curious by-products of love is a self-centeredness of so deep a hue that sober judgment, unmodified by discretion and charity, would give it a much harsher name. Self-centeredness makes men blind. And blindness leads to mishaps. It brought Guido a mishap of the most unpalatable character.

Guido, swinging breezily down the street, dizzy with the sweet consciousness of his love, saw Elschen Marlow stand-

ing at her door. Apparently she had just answered the postman's ring, for she held several letters in her hand and she wore no outer garments.

Because he was so transcendently happy, Guido ran up the steps and began to talk to Elschen. He could chatter easily enough now of everything under the sun. And all the time that he was talking to her of the latest play, or the best-selling novel, and the success of a recent local charity bazaar, he felt an almost uncontrollable desire to cry out that he was in love with Janet and quite inordinately happy.

Elschen shivered. The March air was raw and biting. "Won't you come in?" she asked.

Guido had perceived the shiver, and pushing her gently into the house, followed. Elschen led the way to the parlor.

There his pent-up feelings overflowed. He was so blindly, so selfishly happy.

"Oh, Elschen," he cried, "I am so happy, so very, very happy to-day," and stooping, he kissed her. He had meant to kiss her cheek, the cheek he had kissed so often when they were children, but, startled by his exclamation, Elschen had turned her face to him, receiving the kiss full on the lips.

Guido never had any very clear recollection of what happened after that. He realized the moment he had kissed Elschen that he had done something which he should never have done, but he never knew whether his sense of guilt was evolved spontaneously, or whether it received its original impulse by the look of marvelous happiness that overspread Elschen's face. It was a wonderful look, a look that was a revelation to him, for, although he had never seen anything like it before—since Janet had been condemned to mask her feelings—he knew instantly what that look meant. Elschen loved him. Since she loved him there was only one possible construction which she could place upon his kiss. The horror of the situation made him grow hot and cold and cold and hot in such rapid succession that he felt as if alternate streams of hot and cold water were being played upon him.

"Oh, Guido," said Elschen, too engrossed in her own beatitude to trouble to interpret the strange expression on Guido's face, "Oh, Guido, I am so happy, too. For the

longest time, Guido, I did not dare hope that you really and truly cared for me. And now my dream has come true. Oh, Guido, I have loved you so long!"

Guido was appalled. The catastrophe had descended upon him with such incredible speed.

He muttered and murmured disjointed words and phrases; he hacked sentences asunder, ejaculated syllables as shuffling and blind as a baby's pre-lingual jargon. Elschen perceived nothing out of the way in all this. She was too intent upon herself, too eager to talk to be a careful listener.

Guido's nightmare received the final embellishment when the *Herr Pastor* came out of his study and was haled into the room by Elschen and apprised that Guido and she were engaged. And yet he told himself that Elschen was right, wholly, entirely right in placing the construction she did upon his behavior. Would not every pure-minded girl have done the same. Guido, we perceive from this, was as guileless and as innocent as Elschen herself.

The *Herr Pastor* said many pleasant things to Guido. He told Guido what a fine chap he was, and how proud he, the Reverend Marlow, would be to have him as a son-in-law. No girl could be entrusted to safer hands than his. He knew of no young man who would be more welcome to his Elschen. That they did not agree on politics was lamentable, but in his capacity of *Seelsorger*, he had learned to rate character above all else. If this had not been so, he might have felt inclined to say Guido nay, as Guido had been brought up as a freethinker.

How Guido cursed his good character at that moment!

There were a variety of reasons why Pastor Marlow rated Guido's character so highly. For a very long time after the evening on which he had picked Guido up at midnight in Shantytown, he had suspected Guido of some of the more obvious errors of youth. He had taken counsel with himself and had finally, after considerable delay, decided to impart his suspicion that Guido was straying into the primrose path of dalliance to Frau Ursula.

He called upon her one afternoon for the express purpose of carrying out his intention. His visit happened to fall upon a day when Frau Ursula's delight on discovering that Ella really desired to live a virtuous life still wore a

keen edge. She was at the time excessively proud of Guido's share in the girl's conversion, though she would have perished sooner than admit as much to Guido. But she admitted it to her pastor. She boasted of it. She gloried in it. She praised her boy's goodness and uprightness and his clean heart, with the result that the *Herr Pastor* received the impression that Guido's sole object in strolling through Shantytown or lower Main Street at night was to succor fallen women. Hence the almost exaggerated esteem in which he now held Guido.

"Therefore, *mein Junge*," he concluded, "I give my consent to the engagement with all my heart. *Unter einer Bedingung*. You are both much too young to think of marriage for some years to come. I do not believe in long engagements. Therefore let this engagement be understood but not proclaimed. And, in conclusion, Guido, I will not have you hanging around the house every evening. Once a fortnight for the present is enough. And I do not want you to think that that one evening a fortnight is to be a continual kissing bout. I feel very strongly on this point. I rely on your sense of honor, Guido. When you are a little older—h'm, perhaps even now—you will comprehend my reasons. At any rate, for the present I will spend the greater part of the evenings on which you call with you and Elschen."

Guido said neither "yes" nor "no," and was conscious of nothing but supreme wonder that human beings could be so blind, so ridiculously, asininely blind. Could Elschen's father not guess the truth? Was facial expression no longer an index of what was passing in the mind? Or, had he suddenly lost the power of facial expression? What of the Pastor's much-vaunted knowledge of humanity? Did joy behave itself as he was behaving? Could joy he struck dumb as he was struck dumb? Did love change a man of average sensibilities to a clodhopper and a fool? Then he recalled, with a pang, that he had conducted himself in very much the same way at Janet's barely half an hour ago. What a difference in the causes bringing about the same effect? His embarrassment increased. He had a momentary sensation, a sensation that arose spirally from somewhere within him, that he must interrupt the *Herr Pastor*, and brutally, without any circumlocution whatever, tell him the

truth. But a glimpse of Elschen's face, radiant with a joy in which the human element had been almost entirely superseded by the divine, sent the blood from his heart and the resolution from his mind. The old feeling of tenderness which he had cherished for Elschen awoke. He pitied her immeasurably; then, too, she was the girl that Otto loved, and this further enhanced her value; she seemed to him now to be his dupe; and in pitying her he for the moment forgot his own plight.

"So, *mein Junge*, now I must go. I have a confirmation lesson to give. I am late now. No more dallying to-day. Guido, I rely on your honor."

Guido and Elschen were left alone.

"Oh, Guido," she said, "I am so happy."

His last chance to escape seemed to be cut off by her iteration of that one poor, rich little phrase. He raised her hand to his lips and kissed it. Neither falseness to Janet nor hypocrisy in that! The fineness of the boy's character was evidenced in that he pitied Elschen and hated himself.

At last he found himself out on the street, under God's clean sky, away from his tormentors. He rushed home like a man demented, brushing blindly past people whom he knew without recognizing them. All he was conscious of was an overmastering desire to be alone. There was in this desire something of the instinct of the mortally wounded animal, which spends its last strength in its quest for solitude.

He rushed to his own room, thankful that his mother was not at home, and closing and bolting the door, stood face to face with his own soul.

He was filled with self-detestation. He magnified the wrong he had done. He had so exaggerated a sense of honor that he felt he had committed an unforgivable act in kissing Elschen. He told himself that he was a poltroon. He was worse than a poltroon. He was a knave. He was worse than a knave. He was a fool. He was worse than a fool—the word had yet to be invented that was bad enough for such as he.

Of course he amply deserved the predicament in which he found himself. What right had any man to kiss a girl unless he intended asking her to marry him? Elschen was not to blame—not in the least. He exonerated her com-

pletely. He was hideously, heinously at fault. He deserved the worst punishment that could fall to lot of mortal man. He did, indeed. He had kissed Elschen's cheek as if she were—no, not a courtesan, heaven forbid!—but a toy dog, or a pretty baby, or a Persian kitten—anything, in fact, that one fondles and caresses as an outlet for one's own healthy exuberance without giving thought to the nature of the recipient's feelings. In bestowing upon her so utterly meaningless a kiss, he had degraded Elschen almost as much as if he had kissed her with passion.

He drank of the very dregs of self-loathing and shame.

And, in indescribable bitterness of spirit, he reviewed his career, adding to his former inventory of deeds ill done this new, culminating misdeed.

"What have I done so far?" he question himself. "I have destroyed my mother's happiness, ruined my step-father's life, outraged the decencies in my behavior toward my best friend, kissed a courtesan and engaged myself to a girl I do not love."

And suddenly, in a fiery flash of intuition he realized that his latest escapade involved consequences more far-reaching than his stunned intelligence had yet apprehended. He was facing not a temporary inconvenience, something that would adjust itself automatically as time went by, but a permanent mischance, which, unless dealt with efficiently at once, would make of his entire life a misadventure of the most cruel kind.

"Oh, God!" he cried, "I have ruined my life and Janet's."

He buried his face in his hands, and sat thus, mind, heart and soul engulfed in chaotic agony.

What to do?

"There is nothing to do," he said, speaking aloud in a hollow, unnatural voice.

And yet there must be some step that he might take which would help him escape from the impossible situation in which he found himself.

But his thoughts ran in a circle; or rather, he seemed to be running around in a circle, desperately chasing the heels of a thought which ever flitted before him and ever eluded his grasp. His brain, he thought, had congealed. Surely, no situation could arise in life which energy and honesty might be unable to master.

He set himself the task of analyzing the situation. But it was so simple that to take the pains of analyzing it in words was as easy and as unsatisfactory a task as parsing a sentence is for a high-school pupil.

If he told Elschen the truth and asked to be released from the proposal which he had never made, it would break her heart. If he did not ask to be released, he would break his own heart and—what in this moment of self-abasement seemed infinitely worse—Janet's as well. For Janet loved him. Passionately he told himself over and over again that he was sure she loved him, and a moment later he was reviling himself for his conceit. What monstrous egoism to presume that the sweetest, the finest, the most beautiful, the most perfect girl that ever lived should care for him! He was a worm, a worm of most exceeding earthiness. Impudence even to aspire to Janet's hand. If she had ever happened to feel a fleeting affection for him, it was well for her that she had escaped a creature so emotionally weak, mentally negligible and morally contemptible as himself.

Nevertheless the certainty that Janet loved him persisted. He could not shake it off. It was stronger than reason, than logic, than self-contempt. A heroic resolve was borne in him. He must tell her; he must tell her at once. He did not stop to search out the reasons for this necessity. But he decided to act immediately upon his resolve.

It would be a terrible wrench for Janet, but it was better for her to be hurt now, while she stood on the threshold of life, than later. At this point of his reasoning his modesty played him a bad trick. He could not conceive that Janet cared for him tenaciously, lastingly. She would pluck all thought of him out of her heart and cast it away. He groaned. Her image, without any effort on his part, assumed shape and form and stood before his mental eye. How beautiful she was! How beautiful beyond compare! And how versatile! How richly endowed a mentality, how sweetly attuned a heart!

"I cannot give her up, I cannot," he groaned.

Her image faded away. He bent his eyes upon the vacant air in the hope of conjuring back the vision. But the air was now tenantless of her uncorporeal form.

He beat his hands together.

"There must be some way out of it, there must," he said, defiantly, but his ukase was not attended by the miracle of adjustment for which it clamored. No inspiration came to him. The situation remained as hopeless as before.

"I am not worthy of her," he cried, spasmodically. "Heaven has interfered in her behalf." He knew he was talking wildly, and yet he raved on. "Providence is saving her from me. Prescient Providence!"

The thought came to him that he would challenge Providence by undoing the work of the last hour. But how could he? He tried to picture himself going to Elschen, or to *Herr Pastor*, and saying that it was all a mistake, all a mistake!

With that he again fell to groaning and to calling himself outrageous names. If he had seduced Elschen instead of merely kissing her, he could not have thought himself a greater sinner.

Elschen, it was plain, had the paramount claim on him.

He set out for Janet's. Twilight was thickening as he rapidly made his way to the Geddes home. When he reached it he had not the courage to enter the house, nor to walk onto the porch. He stood leaning against a tree, staring stupidly at the parlor windows.

Suddenly a light blazed out of the darkness that lay back of those windows, and Janet appeared at one of them and prepared to draw the blind.

"Are you coming in, Guido?" she asked, a little surprised to see him there.

"Yes, I suppose so."

"What's the matter?" she demanded, as soon as he had stepped into the hall. He had the sensation of becoming very pale. Without speaking he pointed to the drawing-room.

"What's happened?" Janet demanded again, when they stood facing each other. "Is anything wrong at home? Otto?"

"No."

She did not continue her questioning, but stood before him, quite near him, in an attitude of expectancy which told more plainly than words how close was the bond

between them—how securely intimate the footing on which they were wont to meet.

The realization stabbed the boy as nothing else could have done.

How to tell her? How? He turned coward.

"I cannot tell you what I came to tell," he murmured. "I'll write."

It was the most unfortunate thing he could possibly have said. A light leapt into her eyes, followed by the expression of supreme beatitude which he had seen once before that afternoon on another girl's face. He had no choice now but to speak out. He reddened, stammered, finally burst out wildly:

"Janet, I've come to tell you, that I've become engaged—this afternoon—after I left you—Elschen."

Then, clapping his hands to his face, he flung himself upon a chair, leaning his elbows upon a table that stood to hand.

Janet stood motionless, frozen by the shock of the thing. Her head reeled. She was dazed, but only for a moment. Her mind cleared and told her the thing was preposterous—it could not be—why, Guido had looked at her that afternoon in a way— She drew a long breath audibly, and told herself she could not unmake a fact by futile negating of the statement which told of it. There was some mistake, of course, but the mistake was not in her sense of hearing. She regarded Guido intently. He seemed to her to be hiding his face in shame quite as much as in dejection.

"Guido!"

He looked up, blindly obeying the sharp ring of the usually soft voice.

"Guido!" She went to the table, and stood over him, gazing searchingly into his eyes.

"Is this true, Guido?"

He managed to enunciate the monosyllable of assent.

So distraught was his appearance, so eloquent of a mind almost unhinged by a shock that for the moment her entire thought was of him, not of herself.

"Guido, is there nothing else you want to tell me in connection with this?"

Guido rose to his feet. He did not answer her, but went blindly to the door, groping, as a sightless man might

have done with gestures which seemed crabbed, aged, heavy.

"Guido, do not go like that."

He turned and faced her. She saw that he was literally blinded by tears. An infinite compassion seized her. Following an impulse which she felt she should stifle, but did not, she went to him and laid her hands upon his shoulder. He took a step backward, so that her hands fell away, and at the same time cried:

"Do not touch me, Janet! I am unworthy, unworthy!"

This might be construed as the generous ecstasy of a lover, and did not alarm Janet unduly, but when he cried in a tone which carried a specific charge, "I—God forgive me!" Janet shrank back, frightened, abashed and awed. She thought the thing she did not wish to think, for it seemed the only plausible solution. She shrank from the odious suspicion in dismay. She thrust it aside. But, a silent spectator, it persisted in the background of her thoughts, ready to be haled into court at a moment's notice.

They stood in silence for a few moments, Janet's eyes fixed on Guido in vague, mute alarm. Then, quite suddenly, he turned and bolted from the room and out of the house.

Janet made no effort to detain him or to call him back. She stood perfectly still, in the midst of the room, where he had left her. She was frozen with bewilderment. Of one thing only she was sure and that was that Guido did not love Elschen. Then—— Did his wild words signify what they seemed to signify? She could not think so. She would not think so, and resolutely she shut the gates of her consciousness against any polluting thoughts.

Why then? Why then? Why?

Her mind seemed to swim about in an ocean of unformed thought trying to catch at something tangible. Her perplexity grew. She was entirely at loss what to think, what to surmise, what to believe. Her emotions were not yet enlisted. She was as yet too intent upon the mystery of the affair to feel the pain that must inevitably arise for herself out of the situation. Never, in all her life, had a more baffling experience befallen.

Five minutes had elapsed since Guido had left the house, and still she stood there thinking, or trying to think. Her

father, entering the room, spoke to her twice before she heard him.

Then, in an instant, the freshets of emotion were unloosed, and she was caught in such a whirlpool of pain and of sorrow that it seemed to her now sharpened senses that she were being torn asunder.

"Father!" She told him briefly, with brutal directness. "Guido went and engaged himself—to Elschen—directly after leaving me—us—this afternoon."

"What's that?" Professor Geddes demanded, sharply.

"Yes, it's true. Oh, Father!"

She had called him "Father" once when her mother lay desperately ill, and again after Grossvater Geddes' death, and now! Professor Geddes took a step forward.

"But——" he interposed.

"Don't, father, don't! I understand it as little as you do."

"But, my dear, this is unbelievable. After looking at you as he did to-day——"

"Father, don't, don't——"

Professor Geddes relapsed into unwilling silence. He wanted to say something, feeling vaguely in a clumsy sort of way that speech might possibly relieve the dankness of the situation somewhat, might, perchance, help to clarify it.

"My dear," he began again, feebly.

"Say nothing now, father. Not now. I know nothing myself beyond the bald facts. No, that's not true. I know a lot more. I know that Guido is terribly unhappy and frightened over it. If you had seen him!"

"Then why? After allowing you to believe——"

"Daddy, dear, please!" The world of misery in his daughter's voice struck the Professor dumb.

"I haven't got my bearings, yet," said Janet. "It came like a bolt out of the blue. I—oh, Daddy, Daddy!" And she flung herself into her father's arms.

"My dear! My dear!" And then, in an altered tone, the Professor added, "The wretch! The wretch!"

"No, Daddy, you must not speak of him like that. I won't have it." Then, suddenly, her emotion changed from gentleness into an emotion which the Professor had never seen his girl evince before. She seemed now to be borne on a swift current of inextinguishable, insuperable fire.

She was all aflame—flame and sparks. Her words came quickly, with a terrible, direct incisiveness.

"Father, I love him, you cannot guess how much. There is some mistake. He did not say, 'I engaged myself.' He said, 'I became engaged.' I know there is a mistake. It cannot be otherwise. I know he loves me, and you know it and mother knows it. What's happened? It's worse for him than for me. He does not love Elschen. They will never marry. This is a hideous interlude. Father, I am going to take a course in nursing. I haven't told you yet. Mother wanted me to wait until next autumn, but now I am going to enter whatever hospital will have me at once. That will take me away from home. I could not meet Guido just now. I feel as if my heart were breaking, but he has got to go on coming here as if nothing had happened."

"He'll never come into this house by invitation again," said the Professor, quite fiercely.

"Oh, yes, he will," said Janet. "Especially by invitation. What? Going to let him know your girl's heart is broken? Pride, Daddy, you and Mother taught me, is a fine thing if it helps us to make a brave fight. But it's not for that reason I want you to have Guido come here and have him often. He's going to need you, Daddy. He's going to need you, terribly. You'd understand if you had seen him as I saw him. He was—well, a broken reed. Just broken. I thought he was going to cry, like a woman. Do you hear what I say, Daddy? His eyes were so full of tears that he could not see—he stumbled across the floor, just stumbled. Oh, Daddy, you have got to be most awfully good to him, because he is in terrible trouble."

"My child, my child!" The Professor tried to soothe her, but Janet slipped away from her father's arms.

"You have got to promise me that you will do this for me, Father," she said. "I love Guido so it hurts. Even if this marriage were ultimately to come off—but it won't, it won't!" she interrupted herself. There was in her manner something of ferocity. "It won't. It can't. He belongs to me and I to him. Father, promise!"

"But," said the Professor, and was overborne by another torrent of words. Would he refuse her the *real* thing she had ever asked of him? The boy had no other

man to befriend him, not a single one. Would her father turn away from Guido now because he was in trouble? Was that the way of a friend with a friend? Then, seeing that her words were not having the desired effect, she turned crafty. In the end it would be the best thing for her, too—she could not tell exactly why, because, being no prophet, she could not foresee the turn events would ultimately take. But, by showing kindness to Guido now there was no doubt that her father was showing kindness to her, also.

Janet had her way with her father, ultimately. She even got him to promise to help her talk her mother over, a task very much easier than it had presented itself in their imaginations. For Mrs. Geddes, although she thoroughly liked Guido, still clung to her belief that her little girl ought to have a thorough peep at the entire world of young men before electing which one she would have. Also, although Mrs. Geddes liked Guido personally, she would have preferred to have Janet marry an unhyphenated American or an Englishman. Her attitude toward Guido, in fact, was an exact replica of Frau Ursula's attitude toward Janet. Frau Ursula liked Janet immensely, but, as we know, in spite of her loyalty to the country of her adoption, race feeling dully persisted to the extent that she wished Guido to marry Elschen simply because Elschen was a German.

For the rest, Mrs. Geddes did not take Guido's engagement seriously.

"It is just a boy and girl affair, Ned, take my word for it," she said, consolingly, to the Professor that evening in the privacy of their own room. "They are much too young to marry, anyhow. That little milk and water miss will never be able to hold a boy like Guido. So, if Janet does want him, after a while, I dare say she can have him."

"But what is at the bottom of it, my dear? How did he come to propose to Miss Marlow? Tell me that, Jane."

"May be just practicing on Miss China Doll for the benefit of Janet."

"I don't understand the thing in the least," said the Professor, more bewildered than ever.

"Of course not! Neither did Guido. Congenital stupid-

ity along certain lines is an attribute of the most brilliant of your sex, Professor."

"But what if Guido doesn't pull out of the engagement?"

"I'm not omniscient, Edward. And I am sleepy. Very. So we will have to content our souls in patience until the next installment of the affair is ready for public perusal."

CHAPTER XII

IN all this welter of pain and excitement Guido had never once remembered his mother. On reaching home after leaving Janet, the necessity of apprising Frau Ursula of his "engagement" occurred to him for the first time. Simultaneously he remembered the wish which the *Herr Pastor* had expressed that the affair should be kept quiet for the present. He had, of course, violated that wish in speaking to Janet, but, so confused and disjointed was his mental condition that, until this moment, he had given no thought whatever to the Pastor's words.

At any rate, he felt that he was entirely unable to say anything to his mother that evening, and to endure the clamor of joy with which he knew she would greet the news. The situation was truly intolerable.

It so happened that Frau Ursula, on her return home, found waiting for her on the small round hall-table, the second of the series of letters from Hauser perfunctorily urging her to return to him. Like its predecessor, it contained a typewritten enclosure which briefly stated that in compliance with the law he was sending her another one of the letters to which he would ultimately have to refer in bringing his suit for divorce.

It was bad enough to receive these perfunctory letters which, in substance, were so like the imaginary letter which Frau Ursula had desired to receive from Hauser; but the additional inclosure, with its implied suggestion that, failing its presence Frau Ursula might be tempted to construe the letter itself as a sincere invitation to return to him, filled the poor woman with mortification and rage.

She fled to her room and wept.

Dinner that evening was as cheerful a function as a funeral. Guido moped at one end of the table, Frau Ursula at the other, both counting it a miracle that the spiritual indisposition which was so manifest in their own persons escaped the scrutiny of the other. While they were at

desert the telephone rang. The maid answered it, and came to the door between dining-room and hall to say that Frau Hauser was wanted.

"*n Abend, Herr Pastor,*" Guido heard his mother exclaim, when she reached the telephone, and his heart sank within him.

"So soon," he thought, "so soon."

The great news was evidently being imparted to Frau Ursula for almost immediately she began to give vent to joyous expletives which tallied precisely with those which Guido's imagination had pictured her as indulging in.

The telephone conversation with Elschen's father seemed interminable. Now that he was actually in the thick of it, the wretched boy felt that he wanted to get through with it all as quickly as possible—with engagement, marriage, life! The thought of suicide crossed his mind, but, he reflected bitterly, he was neither a German nor a Japanese, and suicide, therefore, must be out of the question.

Having called off at last Frau Ursula came running—actually running—into the dining-room.

"My dear boy, *mein lieber, lieber Guido!*" And he had to submit to the maternal congratulatory embraces which, also, he had foreseen, and which drove him almost mad.

"Why did you not tell me? So that is why you were so quiet at dinner? Pastor Marlow says you took his wish to tell no one too literally. *Hersensjunge*, would you really not have told me?"

Frau Ursula continued along these lines for at least five minutes. Guido came near to hating her. Finally he broke away from her on the plea that he had much work to do and went to his room where he spent an evening so inkily black that in comparison, all previous dejections through which he had passed seemed pallid shadows.

Followed months of misery. One alleviation remained—the *Herr Pastor's* orders that Guido was not to visit the parsonage more than once a fortnight. Pastor Marlow, of course, had not believed that this command would be scrupulously obeyed. He had expected protestations, objections, outright disobedience. He was even more surprised to perceive Guido obey faithfully and to the very letter his second order that the fortnightly visits should

not be perpetual "kissing bouts." He did not impose his presence upon the two young people to the extent originally threatened, and he was astonished, on entering the room unexpectedly one evening, to find Elschen sitting over her embroidery and Guido reading to her from Schiller. That, of course, was an idyllic way of love-making; but it had not been his way and it was not the way of human kind. There were no eagerly snatched kisses, no hands seeking clandestine pressure, no embraces of eye with eye. This boy, Pastor Marlow thought, was really superhumanly good. He deserved a reward.

Therefore, when Guido took his leave, and did not kiss Elschen's lips, or even her cheek, but delicately raised her hand to his lips, Pastor Marlow thought this was the time to bestow the credit mark, and said, heartily:

"Come, come, Guido, you must not take everything I say so literally. You young people are entitled to one or two real kisses every fortnight, especially when you behave yourself so *exemplarisch* all evening."

The effect of these words was unexpected. Elschen blushed a deep scarlet and hung back, looking frightened and bewildered. Guido also reddened, and looked extraordinarily unhappy.

"Well, well," said the *Herr Pastor*, "you two young people are very modest, I must say. That is very nice, but it was not my way in my youth."

This little comedy was reenacted every time that Guido called. Twice he took occasion to telephone Elschen on the evening of his projected call to say he was detained by work which had to be done. He made no effort to transpose his visit to another evening, but waited until the next fortnight came around and dutifully called then.

There was something in this more than natural. The *Herr Pastor* did some hard thinking. He wondered whether it was his duty to speak to Guido and ask him whether he was quite, quite sure that he had not made a mistake in proposing to Elschen. There was no need to ask Elschen whether *she* had made a mistake. A look of such supreme happiness overspread the poor child's face whenever she saw Guido, or heard his name mentioned, or received a message from him, that it was easy enough to see how whole-heartedly she loved him. His coolness in

courting her aroused not the ghost of a doubt or of mistrust in her artless mind. Had he not kissed her, and told her that he was happy? The memory of that moment was the most wonderful thing in heaven and earth for poor little Elschen. It was so wonderful that she doubted whether happiness so transcendent could be endured twice.

Her senses were as yet unawakened, her imagination was bloodless, her conceptions of love the vaguest. It is doubtful whether she had any very clear notion of the more intimate obligations of marriage. She puzzled a good deal about the origin of the little ones who came to bless a happy union. She could not bring herself to ask anyone, but it was not her modesty so much as the sense of her own monumental stupidity in not comprehending what apparently everybody else comprehended, which forbade the question. She had formulated a theory of her own—on a sort of immaculate conception basis. She thought that by living in the same house, more particularly by sleeping in the same room and in the same bed—a proceeding which, when applied to herself in thought sent her into paroxysms of blushes even when no one was by to witness this outward manifestation of her inward adventuresomeness—and by having the marriage lines pronounced, the babies happened around some way or other. True, there were minor discrepancies in this theory which troubled her not a little. There were, for instance, the unfortunate babies who were not wanted by their parents. There were the still more luckless waifs who, strictly speaking, had no parents—merely a mother. But theologians of every creed and scientists, too, have encountered similar stumbling blocks in the way of a favorite theory, and have contented themselves by skipping over them as alertly as Elschen skipped over hers.

The *Herr Pastor* was heartily thankful when summer arrived, carrying Guido away to the mountains to resume his work in the hangar. Frau Ursula accompanied her son. Mrs. Geddes had again invited her to spend the summer at "Waldheim" and Frau Ursula had eagerly accepted with the same proviso as the previous summer. Guido was not entirely pleased with this arrangement. He had been very much surprised by the continued kindness



of Professor Geddes and his wife. It made him vaguely uneasy. They had every reason to despise him and cross him off their visiting list. Instead of that, the invitations for himself and his mother had come in as steadily and as frequently as before. The only difference in the Before and After lay in the continued absence of Janet from these little gatherings, which were explained naturally enough by her embryonic career as a nurse.

The situation had a curious effect upon Guido. He felt that there was only one possible explanation for such magnanimity, and that was that it was not magnanimity at all but indifference. He had probably been entirely mistaken in thinking that Janet cared for him. She had undoubtedly never given him a thought excepting as a friend and comrade. His habitual modesty and undervaluation of his own personality helped to fortify this illusion, thereby increasing his unhappiness a thousandfold, and robbing him of what initiative he might otherwise have developed in striving after his freedom.

He was thankful as never before when college closed. For the first time in his life he welcomed the idea of physical labor, labor so exacting and unceasing that it would leave no room for thought.

On the day before leaving for "Waldheim," he went to New York on an errand for his mother. It consumed less time than he had expected, and he found himself with a full hour on his hands before it would be necessary for him to start for home.

The hospital at which Janet as indentured was close at hand. Automatically he started for it, wondering, after he reached the huge brick and sandstone pile just why he had come. He had not the courage to go in and ask for Janet. He had not seen Janet since the day of her return—that dreadful day which was branded ineradicably into his memory. Mrs. Geddes, he knew, called frequently upon Janet at the hospital, and once his mother had accompanied Mrs. Geddes. But he had not been asked to go—an omission which undoubtedly was a concession to his state of being engaged.

He stood upon the lower steps of the shallow stairway that led to the entrance, lugubriously contemplating first the windows of the first floor, and then the windows of

the second. And as he stood there, star-gazing, lo! a miracle happened, for the particular star he was hungering to see appeared at the window, and by one of those coincidences which occur at least once in every life-time, looked down toward the very spot where Guido stood looking upward in Romeo-like rapture.

They were both so amazed that for a moment their faces remained quite immobile. Only at the end of that first long second did Guido remember to remove his hat.

A soft blush spread over Janet's face. It was so faint, so very, very delicate that it seemed barely more than the reflection from the downward-dipping sun: She gave Guido a smile of extraordinary sweetness, and stood looking down upon him with eyes at once sad and happy. Presently she turned her head. Apparently someone had called her, for she nodded. Then, facing Guido once more, she smiled and nodded to him friendly. After that she disappeared.

At any rate she was not angry with him. Whether she loved him or not, she was still his friend, still thought of him in kindness, bore him no ill-will, wished him well. He hugged these reflections to his heart, and warmed his shivering soul at the tiny, infinitesimally small fire of hope which they had kindled.

As Janet was unable to obtain a furlough for even a week-end, Guido did not see her all summer, and was reduced to subsisting on the recollection of that smile of extraordinary sweetness with which she had gazed down upon him from the hospital window. In every leisure moment—and the most crowded life has its moments of relaxation—he took that look out of the casket of his heart and handled it lovingly and turned it over and caressed it as if it had been a physical memento, like a wisp of hair or a photograph. More souls finger intangible tokens of this sort than the world wots of.

The *Herr Pastor* did not close his church in summer, holding, justly enough, that a congregation needed spiritual comfort quite as much during the hot weather as during the cold. Elschen, in former years, had been in the habit of remaining at home with her idolized father. This summer Pastor Marlow did something unusual. He wrote a sister of his who intended summering at Elka Park, and

asked her to invite Elschen for a few weeks. The sister did better than that—she invited Elschen for the entire summer. Elschen did not want to go. Pastor Marlow entreated, coaxed and was finally forced to assert his father's authority to make his stubborn little daughter yield.

"She may meet someone else up there in the mountains," thought the Reverend Marlow, grasping at the favorite straw of parents caught in the backwater of their offspring's amorous entanglements.

But Elschen did not meet the hypothetical "someone else." Her letters were full not of Elka Park nor of her aunt and the amusements to which her aunt was taking her, all of which advantages were conscientiously enumerated, but of Guido. The *Herr Pastor* noted with an amusement in which the element of anxiety was not absent, that his little girl lumped together at the beginning of her letter all the information which she felt in duty bound to impart to her parent. Having painstakingly reported all the picnics and the parties, she settled down to the real business of life, which for her, of course, was Guido. When she wrote of Guido her slightly pedantic style changed. It retained all the old-fashioned, dear quaintness, but gained something in sparkle, in dash and in life. Even her handwriting lost some of its painful precision as soon as she was embarked upon the topic of topics. Guido this and Guido that. The *Herr Pastor* could picture the little maid, her face flushed and eager, in her eyes a look of dazzled happiness, as she sat writing the letter, careful as a child to make no mistakes in punctuation or in spelling or in chirography.

Frequently Elschen enclosed letters from Guido, asking her father to return them immediately after having read them. The excellent man became more and more perplexed. Certainly there was nothing in Guido's letters to explain Elschen's eagerness to get them back with such promptitude. There was nothing remotely lover-like about them. They were letters which an elder brother might have written to a sister for whom he felt a great tenderness. Aside from the tone of gentleness which pervaded the letters, they were nothing but a chronicle of Guido's life and activity. In one of his earlier letters he apologized

to Elschen for replying to her letter in English, saying that he wished to tell her all about his doings, but there were so many terms incidental to his life as an incipient airman, of which he did not know the equivalents in German, that English became imperative.

After reading half a dozen of these unloverlike epistles, the pastor found himself in the last stages of parental despair.

"*Ach was,*" he reflected, "they cannot get married for years to come," thus grasping at the second straw cultivated by perplexed parents, after the first has failed them.

Frau Ursula and Guido returned to Anasquoit the last week of August, Janet, Guido learned on the day before his departure, had arranged to come to "Waldheim" for a week in September. He wondered whether it was really mere chance that had made her furlough possible only after he was gone.

Elschen had returned to Anasquoit the middle of August. Guido paid his first perfunctory call at the Marlow's and was made uncomfortable by the searching look with which the Pastor fixedly regarded him.

It was an unhappy autumn both for Frau Ursula and Guido.

Hauser obtained his divorce in September. Frau Ursula was almost prostrated with grief, but showed a brave exterior. The world was kind in return. All her old friends, Tante Baumgarten, Mrs. Erdman and her husband, Professor Geddes and Mrs. Geddes and, last but not least, old Dr. Koenig, did not allow a week to go by without dropping in to see her. So that the Hauser-von Estritz household did more informal entertaining than ever.

But no friendships, be they ever so sincere and well-intentioned, can fill the void left in a woman's heart by the unhappy termination of a love-affair. While we are in the flesh, the ties of the flesh must serve as bulwark and ballast of the spirit. Mother and son, much as they appreciated the kindness that prompted the frequent visits of their friends, were best satisfied when alone. Nor was Frau Ursula as badly off as Guido. Guido knew of his mother's trouble and sought to alleviate it by showing her an increased tenderness. She, however, did not know of the canker that was gnawing at the boy's heart and often

rode rough-shod over his feelings when, in his presence, she praised his bride-elect—her sweetness, her docility, her loveliness—and her boy's happiness to those mutual friends who, with the Pastor's consent, had been let into the momentous secret.

The situation began to prey on his mind. He lost his high spirits, became nervous and often showed an irritability in regard to matters of trifling moment for which his mother took him roundly to task. He bore her censure—so unaccustomed a thing—meekly enough, blaming her unhappiness for it, for which, of course, he held himself responsible. So that, after all, although he thought he had not deserved strictures so stringent for the trifling fault of irascibility, he felt that he was to blame in an indirect way; and proved himself a philosopher by assuring himself that it served him good and right.

His self-respect reached its very nadir. There were so many things for which he blamed himself. He despised himself bitterly for the part he had played in bringing about his mother's divorce; for his engagement; for not having gone to war; for the affair with Erna Gottschalk, which, abortive though it had been, still haunted him.

He felt, moreover, that he had not properly repented of the Gottschalk affair, or he would never have committed the breach of social decorum which had led to his engagement to Elschen. These reflections tended to turn his thoughts inward. All his beautiful buoyancy of manner vanished. He became introspective and reticent, and shrank from companions of his own age, always excepting Yomanato.

He turned to religion. He read the Bible, especially the New Testament, for hours. He read Thomas à Kempis. Whenever he came across a passage either in the Gospels or in the "Imitation of Christ" which seemed particularly beautiful to him, he pointed it out to Yomanato, and Yomanato reciprocated by translating passages from Buddhist writings for Guido.

It was a curious friendship that had sprung up between these two young men, but Guido's life had abounded in such. Guido's friendship with Yomanato differed from his other friendships in one respect. In Guido's other friendships the element of personal liking and good-fellow-

ship and pleasant earthly ties was largely present. In Guido's friendship for Yomanato, however, there was nothing convivial. It was an impersonal sort of a relation, which seemed to subsist and thrive solely on intellectual and moral grounds. They rarely wasted time and breath in discussing every-day occurrences. Even the War did not consume much of the time which they spent together. Their friendship moved on a very high, a spiritual and intellectual plane.

Strangely serious, strangely erudite even, strangely profound were the conversations which this oddly assorted pair of friends indulged in. Frau Ursula, who, as has been hinted before, was not entirely free from racial atavism, was at first violently opposed to Guido's friendship with Yomanato. But seeing what comfort her boy derived from the Oriental's companionship, and being in addition very much impressed by Yomanato's exceptional urbanity of manner, she withdrew her objections and even invited Yomanato to dinner every two or three weeks.

But religion was not the only topic that these two were absorbed in. Religion was their every-day and Sunday fare, to be partaken of at morning, noon and night, in private or in company. It was their parlor topic as well as their topic behind closed doors. But there was another topic which they never discussed unless assured of freedom from interruption and eaves-dropping. Intuitively they felt that this topic was taboo in polite society, that it would be frowned upon by the college authorities and render them generally obnoxious if dragged into the open light of day. They strove the more assiduously to master the subject in all its complicated and fascinating features.

The subject was socialism.

It was inevitable that two currents of thought, both dynamic, both vital, both inextricably interwoven with the intricate pattern of life, and flowing alongside of each other, should not fall into parallel grooves. By a well-known optical delusion two straight lines running parallel to each other, if viewed at a certain angle, as railroad tracks from a slight elevation, seem to converge and ultimately to flow into each other.

This is precisely what happened to the spiritual tracks upon which Guido's mind was spinning along its way.

They converged and then merged, and from this merger there evolved a thought possessing all the impassioned, pellucid incisiveness and vigor of a revelation. It danced before his delighted mind's eye like a burning torch, and like a burning torch sent its flaring light now into this, now into that hitherto dark, unilluminated corner.

Christ had taught socialism!

There was no doubt in Guido's mind that he had hit upon a great, hitherto undiscovered truth. Christ had taught socialism! This was Christ's real message, the message which lay imbedded in the Gospels, which ran through all his words and sayings and parables. Why, it was as plain as plain could be. In rejecting this message, which was writ in letters so large and round that he who runs may read, the world had rejected Christ. That was the reason why the dark dominion of sin continued to flourish upon earth in place of the kingdom of heaven which Christ foretold and which is realizable here on earth.

It was long past eleven o'clock on a Friday night when the Great Thought, which had been so long preparing, burst its embryonic shell and presented itself to Guido in all the pristine beauty of a newly delivered creature. The moment was one of enchantment, of spiritual ecstasy. His joy was too great to be crowded back into his own heart. He needed to share it with someone, with some friend who would comprehend, sympathize and perhaps applaud.

So, in spite of the late hour, he donned hat and coat and noiselessly sallied forth.

It was a beautiful night, placid, balmy, breathing that deep-contented stillness which beats almost like music upon the ear fatigued with the thousand noises of the day. The stars were out and looked particularly close to the earth, as close almost as if hung from a tropical sky. The resemblance to a tropical sky was heightened by the white light shed by a brilliant moon, its last quarter pared away to a mere incandescent rind.

In a burst of race memory, Guido thought of those far-away days when the world was young and man, knowing nothing of modern theories—reaction to environment, survival of the fittest, cosmological gas theory, evolution and Newton's Laws—and filled with such a lust of life as modern man, product of a sophisticated and ever ac-

celerated and accelerating civilization can barely fathom, felt no wonder in the presence of the stars, merely a dumb, brute-like gratitude to God who had been thoughtful enough to stick these perpetual candles in the heavens to light his earthly servants on their way.

What a long distance had humanity traveled since then—humanity and the Church! And how unwillingly had the Church submitted to that steep and thorny journey. How she had fought at every corner, how she had threatened, punished, tortured! Her shrewishness had availed her nothing. She had been thrust back, repulsed, humiliated at every turn. But valiantly, in spite of clipped and trimmed sails, she had pursued her course. Unable to annihilate the irreverent marauder, science, she had nevertheless escaped submergence.

And throughout all those long years, throughout that weary journey, to how many sorrow-laden souls—souls that courageously rejected this superstition or that, souls bowed in anguish, in sickness, burned at the stake, tortured on beds of living coal, with thumbscrew, with any one of the legion of devices which had made of the medieval torture-chamber the devil's own treasure-house—had Christ been the one Inextinguishable Light, the great Divine Spark, the One Vital Fact of the Universe.

An immense gratitude swept over Guido. To be the heir of all the ages! To live in a period in which—in spite of what one of the New York papers in the early days of the War had termed "Europe's Relapse into Barbarism"—men were kinder, fairer, broader than they had ever been before! The new—the socialistic—interpretation of Christ might be mocked at by men for a little while. In the end the Christ-Idea must conquer, as, in the end, it had always conquered. For nowhere, in no age and in no clime, have men shown an oppugancy to Christ—the quarrel had always been with some bizarre, distorted, awry image of Christ, a mock-Christ, thwarting and contradicting the true and living Jesus.

The light was still burning in Yomanato's window, and, not wishing to arouse the entire house by ringing the bell, Guido picked up a handful of crushed stone from the path and began throwing them against the panes. His first throws missed their mark, but after several unsuccessful

attempts a slight crackling told him that his improvised shot was flying true. Nevertheless, a second handful of stone was required finally to arouse Yomanato. The clock on the church steeple was striking midnight when the window finally opened and Yomanato's head appeared.

"It's I—von Estritz."

"Wait," said Yomanato, in a muffled voice.

Guido went to the door and a few minutes later was admitted by Yomanato clad in a silk kimono heavily embroidered in gold thread. His bare feet were thrust into a pair of Oriental sandals and in his hand he held a candle, protruding from the neck of a bottle. In silence, stealthily, like a couple of burglars, the two young men crept up the stairs to Yomanato's room.

"Were you asleep?" Guido inquired, with some compunction.

"Yes, but it does not matter. I am a light sleeper and it does not frighten me to be waked. Besides, I want to study later on. That's why I left my lamp burning. So you did a good deed in rousing me. You have something of interest to tell me?"

"Yes, the most interesting thing in the wide world."

"Proceed," said Yomanato.

Guido hesitated a moment before beginning his story. He was so full of his subject that he barely knew where to begin. Then, suddenly, he began pouring himself forth in words impassioned and tender, in imagery quivering with intensity of feeling, in phrases which worked like a contagion upon the Japanese's impressionable mind.

He cited passage after passage from the Gospel to illustrate his point. There was, above all, the Nineteenth Chapter of St. Matthew, which must make it plain to all who were not willfully blind that Christ's real message was a socialistic one. He summoned the spirit of the Gospels, *in toto*, to buttress his point. Always and everywhere Christ had insisted upon kindness and justice to the poor; always and everywhere had he insisted upon the duty of those who followed him to think of others rather than themselves. Socialism had been His real message. Man's spiritual and economic equality, no matter how great the divergence in mental equipment and natural endowments, had been the gift with which he would have dowered man-

kind. But man had been blind, quite incomprehensibly blind. But the hour was at hand when a clarified insight, a finer vision must be vouchsafed the human race.

The Kingdom of Heaven was realizable on Earth—and this—this had been Christ's message.

Yomanato looked his gravest.

"You have rendered me a greater service to-night, von Estritz," he said, "than you can imagine. There were two points in Christianity which repelled me and kept me at variance with the Church. You have smoothed both my difficulties away at one bold swoop. There is now nothing to hinder me from joining a Christian Church."

"Do you seriously mean that you intend to embrace Christianity and to retain your Buddhistic and Shinto beliefs as well?"

"I have already explained to you," said Yomanato, tranquilly, "that Buddhism is the least assertive of religions, and the most inclusive. Buddhism is a vast mansion, and in it there are many chambers. Shinto is but a small antiquated room, a mere corridor, perhaps—a mere connective. Christianity is an enormous, palatial chamber, full of archaisms, it is true, yet modern in atmosphere, because pulsing with life. Shinto I can after a way practice in solitude. But I miss the social worship, the ritual of the Buddhist Church. There is now nothing to keep me from joining a Christian Church, preferably the Episcopalian or the Unitarian. I can be both a Christian and a Buddhist."

If Guido had listened with any degree of attention, he would have pounced upon the disparity of the two denominations which Yomanato, as by chance, had plucked from the crossrow of Christian creeds. He was too much engrossed with his own great discovery to give heed at the moment to another's religion needs or meanderings.

Irrelevantly he broke out again in a moment:

"This entire business of private capital and private fortunes is all wrong. Take myself. What right have I to all the money that is waiting for me when I come of age? What right had my father to it before myself? It was my maternal grandfather who earned it. Or, rather, his employees earned it for him."

Yomanato looked very grave.

"If you feel the responsibility of the great wealth which will some day be yours," he said, "why not devise ways and means now for using it wisely when it is placed in your hands?"

"Ah," Guido exclaimed, "I wish I were living in a socialistic state, now; then I would be rid of that wretched half-million which is waiting for me."

"You do wrong to speak and think of half a million with such impatience," said Yomanato, gently. "Think how much good you can do with even the income of that sum! You can endow institutions of learning, you can give beds to hospitals. You can found scholarships, you can help men and women who are not brilliant enough to win scholarships but who have a great love for learning and infinite patience to acquire it. Take my case. If Metsetsuma had not offered to pay my way for me, I would have been financed by a former teacher of mine, a man who devotes his entire not inconsiderable income to sending young men to Europe and America to be educated."

"And are teachers in Japan paid so munificently that they can support several young men abroad besides paying for their own upkeep?" Guido asked, in surprise.

"When I said that this teacher devotes his entire income to this educational work, I literally meant just what I said," Yomanato rejoined. "He deducts enough only for his food. His rent costs him nothing, as he exchanges tuition for his room-rent; his clothes also are obtained in this way. Not wishing to further encroach upon his leisure time, which he devotes to the study of foreign languages, he does not exchange tuition for food. But his tastes are so frugal that his living costs him barely anything. He subsists entirely upon brown rice and baked sweet potatoes."

"Why," Guido exclaimed, with fervent impetuosity, "that man is a Christian, though he may not know it."

Yomanato smiled amusedly. The influence of the Occident, more particularly of Guido's firebrand impulsiveness, had so far influenced Yomanato that he at times permitted himself the luxury of allowing his face to mirror his emotions. He said:

"My former teacher is a Buddhist. If he had ever dipped into Christianity, which he may have done as he is

a very learned man, he probably regards it with the same benevolent indulgence with which you regard Buddhism.

"Allow me to say one thing to you, my friend. I know I need not fear to give offense to one as sensible as yourself. Why, when you wish to praise anyone's virtues, do you invariably exclaim, 'That man is a Christian!' Is not pride, egoism and even intolerance present in such an ejaculation! I remind you of Count Okuma's saying which you so much admired—that certain difficulties in international relations can be successfully solved by nothing but religion. It was not Christianity that inspired those words. Will you not learn to see that the essence of all true religions is the same? In what I would like to call their outer accouterments they differ, and they differ in their metaphysics. But quintessentially, in their application to the conduct of human life, they agree. One great teacher may have seen one point of light more clearly, another master another. But there is no divergence. There is concurrence only."

Guido, after a moment's reflection, said:

"You mean, do you not, that one religion is adapted to the needs of certain races, other religions to the needs of other races. Is that what you mean?"

"Rather let us say that one religion is adapted to the needs of certain races during certain stages of their development, other religions to other stages of their development. Japan will never entirely outgrow the impress left upon her life and thought by Shinto, although Buddhism has virtually superseded Shinto. The Western nations will never entirely outgrow the effects of Christianity, although, ultimately, as I believe, they, too, will embrace Buddhism."

"Are you serious?" Guido asked.

"Perfectly. A long time ago I refused to answer a certain question of yours. You wished to know whether I thought the West less religious than the East. I will answer that question to-night, for I know you better now than I did then. I know that like myself you are a serious seeker after the truth.

"Yes, with all my heart, the East is more religious than the West. We are more imbued with the religious spirit, the religious instinct. I will tell you candidly that it was my habit to blame Christianity for this condition, because

there are so many tenets of the orthodox Christian Church which no well-educated person can accept. I mean, of course, the story of creation, as contained in Genesis, the miracles, and innumerable other points of Christian doctrine. This, as I see it, creates a tendency to drive thinking men and women away from the church. If we regard religion not as a luxury, but as an absolute spiritual necessity, this is a disastrous state of affairs, *unless some more acceptable religion is substituted in place of the discarded faith*. But my principal indictment against Christianity—and I wish to say right here that in indicting Christianity I do not in any way venture to criticise the teachings of Jesus, which were always beautiful, benign and moral—is the doctrine of the immortality of the individual soul."

Guido gasped in amazement.

"But," he interposed, "that is Christianity's greatest stronghold. Personally I do not know what to believe. I do not even know whether a continuation of my own personal self in perpetuity is desirable. But this belief has given comfort to millions of Christians and will continue to do so, and frankly, I do not see that the belief is one that can make for anything but right living, honesty, humanity."

"I will tell you why I object to the doctrine of immortality," said Yomanato. "It teaches the continuance of the soul as a separate entity after death for the period of eternity. That fosters individualism, and individualism is a mixed blessing. Certainly individualism has done much for the Occident—and that is what people mean when they say Christianity has made your Western civilization—but if individualism is persisted in at the present rate, it will transform itself into a terrible curse.

"If the Western peoples continue in their mad pursuit of individualism they will wear themselves out, body and soul. They will become enfeebled and then decadent, and they will perish, and we Orientals will inherit the earth."

Guido was dumfounded. For one moment naked suspicion of Yomanato and mistrust of his race rushed back upon Guido; but the very next words which Yomanato uttered dispelled this mistrust and made Guido ashamed of himself for harboring it.

"I would consider that a very great misfortune,"

Yomanato said, "not only for the races self-doomed to extinction, but for us of the East as well. For we need you. We need you as much as you need us. The genius of the East and the genius of the West differ. The Genius of the West makes for mechanical inventions, for mechanical perfection, for efficiency in government, for progress in science, for standardization of ideals and culture and methods of living, and, above all, for a dissemination of educational facilities. Against all this the East has only one gift to offer—the gift of Religious Instinct.

"I beg of you not to scoff at me, von Estritz. Remember that all great religions have come out of the East—Mohammedanism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity itself—all had their roots in Asia, not in Europe."

"Everybody knows that, of course," said Guido, a little surlily. "I am surprised that you do not think that the One Gift of the East outbalances all the Minor Gifts of the West."

"How could I think so? The East owes the West such an enormous debt. The inventions of the West are refining the conditions of Karma, are making more rapid development of successive generations possible, are, therefore, if considered from the Buddhistic standpoint, helping the great onward striving toward Buddhahood. The only quarrel which the East has with the West is that proficiency in mechanical inventions and science may be and in many circles seem to be put to uses that pervert their real purpose, which, of course, is to further the possibility of leading a spiritual life by refining the surrounding medium in which we move while embodied. When mechanical perfection and the devices of science are used merely to pander to the pleasures of the flesh, then, from being praiseworthy, they become reprehensible.

"It is then that the Genius of the East must assert itself—must act as a brake, a check, a safeguard.

"You see, my friend, how nicely the two counterbalance each other."

Guido sat in silence for several minutes, then he burst forth:

"I've got to digest all that, Yomanato, before agreeing or disagreeing with you. I will say it sounds very plausible. Still I fail to comprehend your hostility to individual im-

mortality. It is usually considered an eminently moral and useful belief, because it is bound to put those who hold it on good behavior while in the flesh. Don't misunderstand me. I never have been able to bring myself to believe in individual immortality, and yet I wish to believe in it because Christ taught it. And I must believe in Christ. I must." He paused a moment, and then continued:

"There came a great crisis in my life, Yomanato. I did not know where to turn for support and guidance. I had read the Buddhist Gospels and I read the Christian Gospels, and in my hour of need I turned to Christ, and not to Buddha. Shall I tell you why? Buddha was as unselfish and as splendid and as pure as Christ, but he had not suffered. If the Passion of Christ is anything more than a mere legend, then Christ suffered to prove his great love for Humanity. And for that reason, I think, Christ, in my hour of need, meant more to me and was more comprehensible and closer to me than Buddha."

"But the orthodox Christian view of Christ's suffering is that Christ died to wash away the sins of the world," Yomanato objected. "And I say frankly that this is the second point of Christianity, as taught by the Churches, which repels me. Allow me to illustrate my meaning by a tragedy which occurred in recent years in Japan. An ignorant peasant, whose mother was ill, was told by a priest as ignorant as himself that his mother might be cured by feeding her a human liver, and suggested the sacrifice of the peasant's only child, an infant. The peasant was heart-broken, but being a devout believer and, since filial piety is the first requisite of Shinto, the slaying of his own child became a religious necessity. His wife, when apprised of the necessity which had arisen, entreated her husband to spare the little one and to slay her instead. This, finally, the unfortunate wretch was persuaded to do."

"Now," Yomanato continued, "the motive of this ignorant toiler of the fields was all wrong, of course. But, that being so, wherein is the Great Sacrifice of Christ right? Does it not place your Western God upon the same footing as the ignorant Japanese believer in antiquated Shinto rites? Is it credible that a loving Deity would exact the

* The incident is narrated at length in Scherer's "Japan of To-day."

agony of a sinless creature for the sake of sin-laden souls? The theory is monstrous."

"I think you do not look at this in the right light, Yomanato," said Guido. "Have you never felt that you loved mankind so much that you would be willing to endure any suffering, any torture, if thereby you could spare others suffering? I think it is in the Buddhistic Book of the Diamond-Cutter that the beautiful and inspired passage occurs which dwells on the necessity of Universal Love. Love is to be extended first to one-quarter of the Globe, then to the second quarter, then to the third, and finally to the whole. This precept covers the identical principle. The Buddhistic version is lyric, Christianity gives us a dramatic and more stirring narrative. For if Love is Love, and not a mere name, it is willing to help bear the burdens of others, or to assume all of them. Thus Christ, as I take it, loved humanity so much that sooner than recant, sooner than repudiate his teachings which he believed would assure men the kingdom of heaven right here on earth, he went to the Cross, and thus in truth died in order to save humanity.

"I can see nothing repellent or morbid in that.

"And I am aware, of course, that this is not the orthodox view. But the heterodoxy of one generation is the orthodoxy of the next."

Yomanato shifted his eyebrows upward—the only sign of perturbation which he ever betrayed.

"The thought is not merely not repellent, but very beautiful," he said. "You cannot think, von Estritz, how these conversations with you help me. You have smoothed away my difficulties. I can now, with clean conscience, accept the Doctrine of the Great Sacrifice, for after all, Jesus and God are one, and if Jesus voluntarily made the Great Sacrifice, and if the desire to make it in the way in which you explain it, proceeded from him, there was no need for God to exact it."

"Precisely," said Guido.

"I wish," said Yomanato, "you could enlighten me on the second point which is troubling me. I mean individual immortality."

"I cannot help you there," said Guido. "I do not believe in it myself. I do not even desire immortality. And

yet Christ expressly taught it and unless you and I can bring ourselves to believe in it, we have no right to call ourselves Christians."

"Christ did not expressly teach it," said Yomanato. "You cannot produce a single passage in the Gospels to warrant that assertion."

"Christ repeatedly promised those who would follow him eternal life."

"Eternal life is not the same as individual immortality," said Yomanato.

"Ah," said Guido. "I see. Absorption in the universal soul. That is the Buddhistic idea of eternal life."

"Something like that," said Yomanato, smiling at Guido's concrete way of expressing an abstract Buddhist thought.

"Well," said Guido, "the doctrine of immortality is one of the big stumbling blocks in my own way. I, like yourself, believe in absorption in the Universal Soul. But, in effect, is that not extinction—at least extinction of the individual personality?"

"You must first of all rid yourself of the idea of personality as a separate entity," said Yomanato. "Personality, or soul, as we understand it, is the aggregate of traits, desires, ambitions, peculiarities which differentiate one individual from another. You will grant that all these traits are more or less by-products of the flesh. The spirit works and moves in and through them; and may, in a way, control and inspire them, but the complex of traits which constitutes personality is not the spirit itself, but a garment for the spirit, and this garment is destroyed by death.

"The spirit, however, in working in and through the flesh in which it is encased in life, fashions for itself—as Buddhists believe—a garment for the future—Karma—in which it will again live and move.

"The spirit, then, is indestructible. Working through an infinity of lives it progresses toward its goal—perfection.

"Seemingly the spirit of the individual persists as an entity, but ultimately, after perfection is reached, it may, like a drop of water which also is an entity, coalesce with more drops of water until an ocean is formed. Its individuality would then, in a way, be destroyed; in another sense, it would continue."

"So that the Buddhist doctrine and the Christian doctrine touching immortality are not as inimical as they would seem at first glance," Guido suggested, thoughtfully.

"Exactly. Especially if Christ taught socialism. That is where you have helped me. It eliminates by objection to the Christian doctrine of immortality, which as I explained before, seemed to me to foster individualism. But I tell you frankly, von Estritz, I doubt whether any orthodox Christian will be willing to allow a socialistic interpretation of Christ."

"What puzzles me," Guido said, "is that the Church seems to think the Golden Rule is a dead letter, a pretty spiritual flourish to all the dogmas and doctrines in which the various churches hedge themselves about. Yet to my mind the Golden Rule is the only thing that counts."

"Of course it is the only thing that counts," said Yomanato.

"The Roman Catholic Church expressly forbids its communicants to have anything to do with socialism," said Guido. "I remember hearing my mother and Dr. Koenig discuss an encyclical in which the old Pope—Pope Leo XIII, I mean—vigorously denounced it, and, judging from some of the things I have read, socialism heartily reciprocates both the dislike and the mistrust which the Church lavishes upon it."

"How can you explain it?" Yomanato asked.

"Well, I believe socialism's grudge against the Church was that religion is a sort of anesthetic which makes folks satisfied to be miserable on earth in expectation of happiness in heaven."

"Ah!" Yomanato exclaimed, "and is that objection not a valid one when applied to the orthodox Christian belief in immortality, with the promise of good things which it holds out?"

"I don't know," said Guido. "I do know, do believe, however, with all my heart, that Christ taught socialism and that true religion and socialism are one and the same thing. Yomanato, I am going more deeply into all this."

More deeply into it Guido did go, with the result that he became more and more firmly convinced that, almost accidentally, he had stumbled upon a great truth. For the first time he glanced at the much-mooted question of

his Destiny without distaste. What if there were something more than silly theorizing to the Synthesis of which he was the experimental guinea-pig—as, in a moment of black fury, he remembered having designated himself?

He endured chills of apprehension and tremors of dread. He had not the least desire to occupy the center of the stage, or even a corner of the stage of the world. He soothed himself with the reflection that the path of reformers is usually both tortuous and thorny and that, if his Destiny was really to take him into the limelight of Life, it would be only after a long and weary struggle.

He wrote Dobronov to come and spend the night with him at the earliest opportunity, as he believed that he had made a great politico-religious discovery. That, of course, was to Dobronov as caviar to the elect, and he arrived the very next evening. He was faultlessly clad, and carried a small bag as immaculate in appearance as himself. He seemed now to be a thoroughly normal, happy human being. He had not yet definitely decided to join the Society of Friends. He was so very busy, he explained, looking after proper sanitation, and model kindergartens, and prize workingmen's cottages, that he had not as much time to read as he would have liked. But he thought Quakerism could be trusted to wait a little longer. So did Guido, when he saw what a difference mere preparation for the new life had made in Dobronov.

Elschen had dropped in for a call during the afternoon, and had been persuaded by Frau Ursula to remain for dinner. Frau Ursula thought she was doing her boy a good turn in keeping Elschen for the evening, and Guido bore his disappointment in not having Dobronov to himself very well. As for Dobronov, he seemed pleased rather than otherwise by the presence of the young girl with her aureole of golden hair and her baby-blue eyes.

"She looks like a German fairy-tale," said Dobronov to Guido when they were left alone for a moment, "as exquisite, as spiritual and as wholesome."

Guido, remembering that Dobronov had formerly scowled at women, forebore with difficulty from chaffing him.

The conversation was general both during dinner and in the early after-dinner stage, while Dobronov and Guido were smoking their cigarettes. Neither Frau Ursula nor

Elschen objected to tobacco, and they remained at the table to hear the end of the discussion between Guido and Dobronov upon the relative merits of the Russian and the English novelists. Guido maintained that the English novelists ranked the Russian novelists, in spite of the Russian's uncanny insight into human nature, because the English writers evinced more poise, good-nature, craftsmanship and pervasive humor. Dobronov was partial to the Russians, and quoted Brander Matthews as saying that Turgenieff's "Smoke" was the most perfect novel ever written. Guido contended that the palm went to "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel."

When the little party finally left the dining-room, and withdrew to the parlor, Elschen, walking ahead of Frau Ursula, murmured:

"How clever they both are"; and, after a pause: "Of all Guido's friends. I like this Mr. Dobronov best. His character is something like Guido's, I think."

"Sergius Ivanovich is goodness incarnate," said Frau Ursula. "There never lived a kindlier soul." And she kindled renewed commendation on the young girl's lips by telling of Dobronov's housing schemes, his sick benefits, and widows' pensions.

"I think," Frau Ursula concluded, "that as soon as Guido is through college he, too, will probably do something of the same sort."

"That goes without saying," Elschen rejoined, proudly, as if jealous of her Guido's reputation. "*Ach, liebe Frau Mama,*"—this was the semi-intimate, semi-formal designation with which Elschen addressed Frau Ursula when they were alone, "how happy I shall be when doing charitable work under Guido's instruction."

Frau Ursula pressed Elschen's hand, and drew her into a far corner of the parlor to show her new sofa-pillow which Mrs. Erdman had made her.

Dobronov took occasion, under cover of the feminine chorus of praise of the pillow, to say to Guido:

"You wrote me about a politico-religious discovery. What is it?"

"I can't tell you now," Guido replied, looking furtively across the room. "My mother will disapprove."

"Just a hint," Dobronov begged.

Guido cast another look in the direction of his mother and fiancée. Their interest in the pillow seemed by no means exhausted, and drawing his chair closer to Dobronov, Guido said, hastily:

"Sergius Ivanovich—St. Matthew, Chapter XIX—how do you interpret it?"

"Well, upon my word!" Dobronov exclaimed. "I like that! Didn't I spend my entire life in the practice of poverty until you came and stopped me? Now I am trying to obey Christ's command in a new way. Whether it is the right way I dare not venture to say."

"It's the right way as far as it goes," said Guido. "But there is the point, Sergius Ivanovich. Not everybody is as rich as you are, nor, therefore, can everybody do as you are doing. But everybody can contribute energy, prayer, thought toward securing a state of society in which the poor will be so well provided for that there will be no poor. I mean—socialism."

Dobronov was seized by one of his explosive rages. In vain Guido said "Ssssh," and kicked his friend's shins and trod upon his toes—quite unmercifully, I believe—to make him hush his clamor. So vigorous an outcry did Dobronov make that Frau Ursula, with Elschen in her wake, came forward and demanded to be told what had happened to Sergius Ivanovich.

"I have just inoculated him with a new idea and he finds it more painful than the toothache," said Guido. He was laughing, though secretly furious with Dobronov for giving him away.

"What's the idea?" Frau Ursula asked comfortably, expecting nothing more stirring than another argument on literature or art.

"Well," said Guido, glaring forbiddingly at Dobronov as a signal that he, Guido, wanted to do the talking. "I have just come to the conclusion that the commandments of Jesus Christ are meant to be obeyed—not some of them, but all of them. I speak particularly of the passage in which Jesus points out that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven."

"I should not think that Sergius Ivanovich would object

to that commandment," said Frau Ursula, mildly. "He, if any man, obeys it to the letter."

"Yes," said Guido, "but for some reason he does not want other men to obey it to the letter."

"How you do put things, Guido Guidovich," cried Dobronov. "You misrepresent me entirely." And in his excitement he sprang from his chair and began prancing wildly about the room.

"You see," Guido continued, addressing his mother and Elschen, "for a long time a conviction has been growing in me that the so-called Christian nations are imperfectly christianized. Folks have been so busy worrying about the salvation of their own precious souls that they have overlooked the fundamental teaching of Christ. They ignore completely the passage I have just quoted. They ignore similar passages, such as 'Woe unto you that are rich,' and 'Not in the abundance of a man's possessions consisteth his life,' and 'Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.' We all know that there are within this very city many desolate homes, many men, women and children in dire distress. We hear of a case here and there, and ameliorate it and pat ourselves proudly on the back, and like Little Jack Horner say, 'What a good boy am I.' And that's where it ends. What does our Christianity amount to? Christ's humanity was burningly alive, but we blaspheme when we apply to the petty, selfish bickering over doctrine and dogma, which seems to be the chief concern of the churches of to-day, the sacred name of Christianity."

"Oh, Guido," cried Elschen, "how beautifully you said all that." The tears stood in her eyes. "How proud I am to think that you——" she remembered the presence of Dobronov, who was still wildly rampaging about the room, and broke off.

"You misrepresent me, you misrepresent me entirely," Dobronov shouted. "I would be the happiest man alive if rich men everywhere would do as I am doing. I am trying to obey Christ intelligently. I am trying to benefit as many of God's children as I may by putting my fortune to judicious use."

"Sergius Ivanovich," Frau Ursula said, soothingly, "we all know that."

"But," Guido continued, "it was certainly not Christ's wish to benefit merely a handful, or even many, of God's children. Surely, he wished and hoped to benefit all. And this cannot be done by private charity, nor by ten or a hundred or a thousand rich men who, like Dobronov, are entirely unselfish."

"I am not entirely unselfish," Dobronov shouted, "and you shall not call me so. You misrepresent me entirely. I am terribly afraid of damnation. And I am living as I am living because there is no other way to exorcise my fear. So you must not call me unselfish again, for in calling me that you say that which is not true, and he who says what is not true, lies."

"Very well," said Guido, "you are selfish. I mean it. You are selfish, Sergius Ivanovich, because you refuse to open your mind to the idea which I have just propounded to you." Dobronov began to skip about the room again with violent gestures of alarm and disgust.

"The only way in which men can obey the spirit of Christ's command is by establishing a government whose function shall be to weed out poverty automatically, to abolish charity, substituting justice instead; meaning by justice an earnest acquiescence in Christ's desire that there shall be no more poor."

"That is nonsense, that is wretched nonsense," Dobronov shouted wildly. "Christ never meant to abolish poverty entirely. There is virtue in being poor. If there are no more poor, where shall virtue inhabit? If there are no more poor how shall the individual acquire merit by charitable deeds? Answer me that, Guido Guidovich, if you can."

"Ah," Guido cried, now thoroughly aroused. "You are selfish, indeed, Sergius Ivanovich. You would allow human souls to continue in avoidable misery in order that a few rich Samaritans like yourself may acquire virtue. I am ashamed of you."

"But what shall a man do to prove his virtue if there is no more poverty," Dobronov cried, in real alarm.

"If there is no more poverty there can be no more wealth," said Guido. "Virtuous men would then fight to maintain so excellent a condition of affairs. For all human institutions are unstable, and there will always be those

who, for their own aggrandisement, would seek to undermine so admirable a state."

Dobronov threw himself violently into a chair.

"I dare say you are right," he said. "You generally are right. You always are right. Guido Guidovich, you are a seer! It is your Destiny."

"His Destiny!" Frau Ursula leaned forward eagerly, a little afraid. She had not entirely comprehended the drift of the talk between Guido and Dobronov. "Guido, what is all this you are talking about?"

"Christian socialism," said Guido.

"Christian socialism!" Frau Ursula exclaimed. "Socialism cannot be Christian, Guido. It is unchristian and immoral. Guido! Good Heavens!" she cried, as a horrible thought struck her. "It cannot be that you conceive the propagation of socialism to be your Destiny?"

"Christian socialism, Mother, yes," Guido replied, firmly.

Frau Ursula became terribly excited. She was so excited that she was inarticulate. It was the last thing which she had expected. And yet, was it? Socialism, anarchism, assassination! That was the order in which Guido's obsessions would follow each other. The poor woman shivered. The Ancestral Curse, she thought, would yet be fulfilled.

"And what does Elschen say?" Guido inquired.

"I do not know much about socialism," Elschen replied, "but if it will accomplish all you spoke of just now, I should say that socialism was nothing but Applied Christianity."

Guido was delighted. He had not given Elschen credit for sufficient initiative in thought and in speech to say something quite as authoritative as that.

"Sergius Ivanovich, did you hear that? 'Applied Christianity.'"

"Yes, I heard." Dobronov suddenly became quite cheerful. The new idea, which had made him so angry at first, now attracted and fascinated him.

Frau Ursula had recovered sufficiently from her dismay to speak.

"Guido," she said, "if you had any idea of what socialism really is you would never think of endorsing it."

"Well, Mother, what is it?"

THE BYPHEN

Finn looked down in eloquent glance in Elschen's direction.

"I don't mind you," said Elschen. "Papa and one of the students here—socialism unite frequently. His friend says after talking to his Papa rather approves. I don't believe all the things Papa's friend says about socialism are really true, but I have a hunchances free love."

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Thus argued Dobronov, and Guido, who knew his Gospels perfectly, could not but concur. Yet he called Dobronov's attention to the apparent inconsistency of the quoted passages with other passages no less prominent.

If Christ had said, "Resist not him that is evil," and "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also," he had also said, "For I come not to send peace upon earth, but the sword." And, above all, he had driven the money changers from the temple.

How did Dobronov explain this? Guido confessed he was entirely at sea. He had puzzled over the context, hoping to find some hidden clue that would eradicate the apparent inconsistency. Did Dobronov think the English translation was at fault?

Dobronov answered Guido's last question first.

No, the translation was not at fault, for Dobronov had read the New Testament both in Latin and in Greek and the translation was tolerably accurate. He thought the explanation must be sought elsewhere.

"I think," he said, "that we must take into consideration Christ's dual nature of God and Man in order to comprehend the passages which are at variance with each other." He interrupted himself. Did Guido admit Christ's divinity? Otherwise the explanation would do him no good.

"Well, I do and I don't," said Guido. "My belief is that Christ was a man so perfect as to be virtually divine. Go on, anyhow."

Dobronov went on.

"I think," he said, "that the God-nature was uppermost when Christ counseled non-resistance. He was angered by the fruits of wrong-doing when he spoke of bringing not peace but the sword, and when he drove the money-changers from the temple, and when he was angered the man-nature was in the ascendant; if the human strain had not predominated over the divine at these moments, he would not either by deed or word have invalidated an attitude bearing the higher spiritual imprint. For you admit—do you not?—the higher ethical value of the commands which these two other passages seemingly undermine?"

Yes, Guido admitted that, of course, and he thought

Dobronov's elucidation very plausible and lucid. It quite contented him; eased his conscience.

But—and he hurled the question at Dobronov forcibly, as if it had been a tangible thing—"How about *this* war?"

"Well, what of it?" Dobronov countered. "What applies to one war applies to all wars."

"I think not," said Guido. "This war is different from other previous wars. You know it is, Sergius Ivanovich."

"No, my friend, it is not. Every generation suffers from the identical illusion," Dobronov replied, with some heat. "If each generation could be brought to perceive the fallacy of its position, if it could be brought to admit the unconditional wickedness of war and the disobedience to divine commands involved by war, then would war become extinct. But each generation in turn temporizes, equivocates, panders to expediency. And the carnage of war continues and Satan laughs in his sleeve."

Guido sat very still. He felt, as he had felt once before, that the issue before him was so tremendous and vital that he must not loiter and tarry in reaching a decision. The issue would brook no delay. His soul's welfare was at stake. He smiled as he realized how easily he was slipping into the terminology of the Church, even while there were many points in Christian theology which he did not believe and could not believe.

He had turned to Christ not many months ago when in cruel turmoil of spirit. And Christ, it had seemed to him, had responded by quickening the divine spark imbedded somewhere within him. He had bowed himself meekly in the dust before Christ's commandment, feeling it to be divine, and thankful for that supreme authority which imposed its all-high will upon his own poor frail shifting human desires and passions. Never, never would he forget that amazing, that uplifting experience. Was it then not churlish and ungrateful to defy Christ's authority in part, to haggle and bicker over it, to pluck from Christ's commands those which suited his purposes, rejecting others which seemed distasteful or impossible of fulfillment?

"If one could only be sure," he murmured.

"Guido Guidovich," said Dobronov, with great earnestness. "You *are* sure. The Devil is tempting you with cant and sophistry. Let your heart speak. Listen to it—

it will tell you that Christ must be obeyed though the act of obedience seems to us, whose understanding is clouded by the flesh, to be full of menace and hazards. Either you have faith in Christ, or you have not. There can be no middle course."

Dobronov had spoken with passionate sincerity and with a tenderness which touched Guido deeply.

"Sergius Ivanovich," said Guido, "bear with me a little longer. It has seemed to me right along that in this War the Allies are so wholly and transcendently in the right that War itself has become a holy thing because prosecuted in a cause so righteous."

"Guido Guidovich!" Dobronov rose, and crossing to Guido, came and sat down close beside him. "You are dearer to me than any of my other friends," he continued. "You are dear to me as my own soul. And, with all the earnestness that is in me, I charge you, now that you have found your way to the right path, the Path of Christ, not to allow yourself to be diverted from it."

"Cast your eye over the page of history. Was the Civil war not fought in a righteous cause, when judged by purely human standards? Was the Revolution an unrighteous war? And the Crusades? Judged by the temper of the Middle Ages, could there have been a more glorious issue than the wresting of the Holy Sepulcher from the hands of the Infidel? Humanly considered, the men who fought these wars on the conscience side were doing right. But, were they right when the divine standard is applied?"

Guido considered this for a moment.

"But," he objected, "invasion. France. Belgium. All the invaded countries of Europe, Dobronov, what could they have done but fight?"

"They could have turned the other cheek," said Dobronov, gravely.

"But it is humanly impossible," Guido cried. "Honest manhood simply cannot do it, Sergius Ivanovich."

"*Holy* manhood might do it," Dobronov responded, gently.

"Christ himself could not do it," said Guido. "Did he stand by and see the poor robbed? I am accepting your explanation of his actions, your explanation of the divergence between his actions and his words. Then, who

are we that we should set ourselves a higher standard than Christ Himself observed?"

"We should set ourselves the standard that He taught," said Dobronov. "An excellent piece of advice was given by Dr. Johnson to Boswell," he continued. "The learned doctor counseled his biographer to regard current annoyances in the light in which a perspective of ten years would be bound to present them. If we expand this advice to apply to those events of history which finally culminated in war, we will get a very fair idea of the transitoriness of issues which presented themselves to the generation which had to deal with them as being of overshadowing and blighting importance. A little patience and, as General Grant remarked, the issues of every war that has ever occurred would have been settled satisfactorily without bloodshed."

"Yes, but if one party to the issue *will* fight," Guido flung out.

"You are running around in a circle, Guido Guidovich," Dobronov replied, gravely. "Live Christ's commands. Do not render them lip-service."

Guido did not reply. He was writhing in spirit. He was tossed to and fro on an ocean of intellectual doubt. Why, oh why, did the Gospels contain these inexplicable contradictions? And, granted that Dobronov's interpretation covered the contradictions, was it possible, after all, to apply the higher, the divine ethics of Christ?

"I must think this over, Sergius Ivanovich," he said. "I can come to no decision now."

"Before thinking it over," said Dobronov, "beg for divine guidance in prayer."

"I cannot pray," Guido replied, shortly. "I have told you that before."

"Learn how," said Dobronov. "School yourself to it. Acquire a talent for it. Prayer is the cornerstone of the true Christian's soul. Through prayer comes guidance and comfort. 'Ask and it shall be given ye.' Prayer is an essential, a fundamental, an indispensable attribute to the Christian life."

"I cannot pray," Guido repeated.

"Learn to humble your pride," Dobronov continued

"Once you have learned to pray you will wonder how you ever contrived to live without that balm of the soul."

Guido did not reply. It was the one subject he would not and could not argue about. Not even with Yomanato. He shrank from baring to others a corner of his soul which he himself understood only imperfectly. He feared to be thought irreverent where, in truth, he was most reverent.

Dobronov was spending the night at Anasquoit, and soon after he left Guido to go to his own room. But Guido did not retire. His spiritual unrest made sleep impossible. Alternately he walked the floor and crouched dejectedly in his morris chair. Doubt was crowding him to the wall. He wondered whether, after all, he understood Christ. Not only Christian doctrine but Christian practices were in part abhorrent to him. Prayer, which the average Christian deems not merely a necessary adjunct of worship but a prerogative and a privilege, was to him incomprehensible. He shrank from it. The thought of it distressed and dismayed him. Nor was the repugnance which he felt for prayer due to pride, as Dobronov had assumed. Quite the contrary. Excess of humility forbade its practice. If there was a personal God—and was it not madness for a would-be Christian to doubt that central fact of Christianity?—who was he, or any other poor wretch to obtrude himself and his foolish little earthly troubles into the Divine Presence? He lacked the audacity to commit so preposterous an act. Simultaneously came the reflection that the average Christian, in praying, unconsciously perhaps, fixes his attention upon Christ and not upon God. But this merely begged the question, for the majesty of Christ is as great and as incomprehensible as the majesty of God—greater, perhaps, since, having been enwrapped in man-nature, He had retained and maintained His divinity—or had attained it.

There was here, he felt, a purely human explanation of the Catholic habit of praying to Mary and to the Saints. Viewed as a concession to the poor, awed and bewildered human heart, there was in this practice nothing idolatrous, as unsympathetic Protestants chose to believe. Prayer directed to the saints was not as abhorrent to him as prayer directed to God. In this hour of his terrible spiritual need, he felt that if he had known which saint best met his re-

quirements in temperament and character, he would have prayed to him with a fervor such as no man had employed in prayer before. But the only saints of whom he could think were Saint Anthony and Saint Francis. Saint Anthony, he remembered, was the Saint who had been sorely tempted by the flesh. Upon an earlier occasion, Guido reflected, smiling grimly, Saint Anthony would have been the proper Saint to address. But this issue was more delicate, finer, more subtle. Saint Francis, that exquisite and gracious spirit, who, in the flesh, had been all meekness and humility and unwavering, simple faith—would Saint Francis understand?

The boy rose from his chair, and knelt down. Claspings his hands, he rested his chin upon the apex thus formed. He remained in this position a few seconds. He could formulate no prayer. Words suitable to an invocation such as he wished to frame eluded him. And suddenly the grim, sardonic humor of the situation overwhelmed him. What was he doing? How could he, who rejected the doctrine of individual immortality, pray to the departed spirit of one who had once been a man?

He might as well embrace Shinto, and pray to the spirit of his grandfather for guidance. There was, on the whole, a lot to be said for Shinto. Since mental and spiritual traits, as well as physical traits, were inherited—always granting the validity of prayer and the immortality of the soul—why not pray to one's ancestors, who might at least be expected to understand just where the shoe pinched?

He rose from his knees. He had, he felt, made himself profoundly ridiculous. Prayer was an emotional habit, and those not to the manner born and bred, might never hope to acquire it. Nor was he at all certain that the acquisition of a purely factitious practice was desirable.

But the image of St. Francis, which he had conjured before his mental vision, persisted. It soothed him unutterably. It soothed him as noble music might have done. Incidents and episodes from the life of the gentlest of all the hierarchy of Catholic saints, floated lambsiently before his closed eyes. He was pervaded by an enormous desire to gather into his heart and soul some of the astonishing religious sweetness and strength which had made Saint Francis of Assisi not merely a commanding figure

in the Catholic processional, but a universal spiritual possession.

The night was drifting on into the small hours of the morning. Fatigue struck at him with clammy fingers. His intense spiritual excitement died away. He clung only to the thought of Saint Francis, clung to it reverently, lovingly, understandingly.

"If I cannot pray," he thought, "I can, at least, meditate." And this reflection sent his thoughts whirling off in another direction. Was prayer merely an atavism from earlier days, when man, uncivilized and unsophisticated, had believed in its objective use, knowing nothing of its higher spiritual functions—of its subjective value? Was meditation destined to usurp the rôle of prayer? Had he, in his ridiculous effort to force himself to prayer, committed the solecism of trying to turn back the wheels of spiritual progress?

It was all a hopeless muddle.

He lay back in his Morris chair and strained away from his spiritual horizon all perceptions excepting only the thought of Saint Francis. He clung to that, clung to it desperately, despairingly, hopefully. If anyone, anything, any religious verity or value could save him from spiritual shipwreck, it was the consciousness of Saint Francis. To a consciousness of Christ, he could not, at the moment, aspire.

Fatigue hammered at his brain with leaden tongs.

The consciousness of Saint Francis remained with him. It became stronger; almost, almost could his straining eyeballs see the supple figure in its monkish garb; the gentle face, the eye alight with perfect love; and suddenly a second figure, more resplendent but not more gracious, sprang up behind and around the figure of Saint Francis, overlapping, merging, superseding. For one moment the two figures—the figure of the Saint and the figure of the Saviour—seemed to waver before the boy's eyes. Then they disappeared. The sense of having seen them was so strong as to almost constitute a vision.

Fatigue hung so heavily upon Guido that reflection became an agony, thought an impossibility. Only one sensation remained—he must not allow himself to sink back in the outer darkness where there was no faith.

What did doctrine matter? Ritual? Prayer? Immortality? What did anything matter but THE SENSE OF CHRIST.

He had that. He must cling to that at all costs. As he saw the Light so must he practice it.

Rising, he went to the table and fumbled sleepily for a pad. Having found it, he wrote a brief note to Dobronov and slipped it under his friend's door.

The note ran:

"My will is broken. There is only the Divine Will Christ's will, not mine, be done."

Wearily, sick with fatigue, so inert that the simple act of undressing induced a sense of vertigo, he crept into bed.

The clock on the church-steeple tolled the hour. It was four o'clock.

CHAPTER XIII

AND so it came to pass in the days of William the Damned that one German-American lad who had been among William's most vehement apologists, having seen with his own eyes the doings which William had sanctioned and ordered, joined the legions who were fighting German Iniquity; and another German-American lad, who had abhorred most violently all that William stood for, whose heart was pure, whose understanding was far above the average, succumbed to the supine delusion of pacifism, in the honest belief that in crowding righteous indignation out of his heart he was following the commands of Christ—Christ, the Great Friend of the oppressed and the down-trodden and the unjustly used throughout the world.

This stage of Guido's career was perhaps inevitable. Given the character, the temperament, the environment, the inherited tendencies, the instinct for spiritual exploration, only a supermind might have offered successful resistance to the mirage of pacifism.

The shallow psychologist would have seen in Guido's decline into pacifism an egoistic attempt to justify himself—if only in his own eyes—for not having forged his way to the Front; or an effort to exonerate his own race. There was, however, a much deeper lying reason for his apostasy. His inactivity had imposed upon him a tremendous self-restraint, and the biting, quivering, incessant strain of the spiritual pressure engendered by the conflict between this self-restraint and his whole-hearted acquiescence in the Cause of the Allies, had made him realize the prodigious dimensions to which purely potential force may attain. It was, he thought, the force that made formidable the Terrible Meek. He made the mistake of not realizing that self-evidently potential energy is of value only insofar as it is a reservoir of forces to be drawn upon when force in active service requires a new supply of convertible energy.

Imbedded in every spiritual nature lies the germ of

fanaticism. That tiny germ was doing its utmost to sprout in the soft, warm soil of Guido's salad-day enthusiasm. Had he been less impressionable to all currents of thought, or a trifle more enamored of the egoist's virtue of consistency, he would forthwith have developed into a first-rate fanatic, and the conclusion of his history would have been radically different.

Guido's delight in a new idea was always as great as a child's delight in a new toy, and the need to display this new shining joy lay heavily upon him.

He went to Dr. Koenig first, thinking, from what he knew of the old physician's outlook upon life, that he would be as pleased as himself by his "discovery." To his consternation, Dr. Koenig, having heard him out, burst into a perfect tirade.

"Socialism!" he cried. "SOCialism! SOcialism!" He employed all the contempt of which his kind, honest, opinionated old heart was capable in stressing the first syllable of the obnoxious word. "What next! Anarchism, I suppose. Socialism! You don't know what you are talking about. I have no love for the Papists, God wot, but if they have rendered humanity no other service they have rendered it this—they have fought more successfully than any empire, kingdom or free state against the encroachments of that most catastrophic of human heresies."

"But why?" Guido demanded, aghast.

"Why? Your common sense ought to tell you that," Dr. Koenig thundered.

"Well, it doesn't. So your common sense ought to help mine out," said Guido, a little impertinently.

"Bah!" said the old man, further angered by Guido's levity. "This is no jesting matter."

"No, of course not," said Guido. "It is my religion, *Herr Doktor*."

"Your religion!" Dr. Koenig cried. "Your religion! Bah. You put me out of all patience. Absurd. Asinine. What does your mother say about it?"

Guido was constrained to reply that his mother did not take kindly to his "discovery."

The old physician emitted a low grunt. Frau Ursula's disapproval soothed his irritability considerably. He calmed down enough to express himself intelligibly.

"Socialism," he said, "is like a juvenile illness. All ardent souls take it. I did myself. It is the measles of adolescence. Perhaps I should compare it to the scarlet fever instead of to measles, for it involves high fever, impaired vision and an incapacity to digest solid nourishment." The old man paused. Pleased with his own metaphor, he leaned so far back in his crackling swivel-chair that Guido thought the chair must part from the base and fly off into space. He purred contentedly.

"Well," said Guido, "scarlet fever is not a pleasant disease, I imagine, and I remember perfectly that when I was a child you did everything in your power to prevent my getting it. Why, then, not do everything in your power, now, in the way of honest argument, to prevent my being the victim of what you choose to regard as a spiritual scarlet fever?"

The old doctor's contented purring stopped. His chair tipped forward violently and his feet struck the floor with a bang.

"For two reasons," he said. "Spiritual ailments are not wisely interfered with. It is far safer to catch them in season, to get through with them and become immune for the future. Besides, your intellectual apparatus must not be tampered with—as you seem to forget. You are a Living Experiment, a Human Synthesis, a man with a Destiny."

Guido flushed angrily.

"You may laugh at me if you like," he said, "but I can tell you that for the first time in my life I am beginning to take my Destiny seriously. Supposing Socialism is my Destiny? What then? I have quite a little fortune of my own. Can I put it to better use than furthering the Cause which I believe will regenerate mankind?"

Dr. Koenig gasped.

"And are you going to use your money like that—at once?" he demanded.

"How can I?" Guido flung back. "I'm not of age."

Dr. Koenig heaved a sigh of relief.

"Another year to wait," he said. "Thank goodness. I think you will have changed your mind about squandering your money like that before you come of age."

Guido, greatly chagrined by Dr. Koenig's attitude, be-

took himself to Professor Geddes in quest of the balm which his ruffled sensibilities required. Dobronov and Yomanato were the most devoted of adherents, but they followed almost too blindly wherever he led, being susceptible to impregnation by his mind to an extent which sometimes alarmed the boy. His enthusiasm required that he should burn away barriers, leap moatlike ditches and take hundred-foot hurdles for the glorification of the New Jesus. Elschen was the most appreciative of disciples, but her plaudits proceeded from the feminine organ of the emotions, while Guido hungered for the cold-blooded approval of the masculine understanding, or for its equally cold-blooded condemnation. Dr. Koenig, he told himself contemptuously, had simply ranted. Ranted.

Professor Geddes, however, was to prove another disappointment. He listened attentively to all Guido had to say, and when Guido finished, he said, in the blandest tones of conventional conversation:

"Well, I dare say you've gone quite deeply into socialism."

"But, sir," Guido demanded, almost explosively, "don't you agree with me? Don't you think that it's precisely that that Christ taught?"

Professor Geddes went at his favorite occupation of matching the fingers of either hand.

"You know," he remarked, gently remonstrative, "that while Mrs. Geddes and Janet go to church regularly—they are very staunch Episcopalians—I hardly ever go. Hardly ever. So I am hardly competent to form an opinion."

"But you have read the Gospels, sir, you know you have," said Guido, accusingly. His vexation was great. Never before had he known the Professor to evade an honest issue.

"Oh, yes, yes," said the Professor, "years ago I read the Gospels. Perfunctorily, I am afraid. More or less perfunctorily. Of course, the historic Jesus is a wonderful figure—a very lovable, appealing figure, a figure highly charged with personal magnetism and an electric pathos. The entire civilized world, of course, concedes that."

Guido almost told the Professor that he wasn't asking what the entire civilized world conceded in regard to the historic Jesus, but he contented himself with saying:

"I see, sir, you do not wish to meet the issue squarely."

"Oh, as to that!" The Professor smiled at Guido quizzically. "I did meet the issue squarely years ago. I vividly remember the *Sturm und Drang* that preceded the encounter. You are in the throes of it now. You are not aware of it, however. You think you have passed your *Sturm und Drangperiode*. In fact, it has only just begun. By and by, my lad, doubt will shake you by the scruff of the neck and shake you most horribly—for doubt, like war, is no respecter of persons. Then, come to me, and I'll help you sort over your collection of beliefs and convictions, and we'll catalogue them together, discarding some and pigeonholing others 'for future reference.'"

The quiet, kindly, whimsical answer shook Guido considerably, but it did not shake his convictions. He continued his readings of the Gospels with unabated zeal, deriving a huge satisfaction from the socialistic color with which he invested them.

It was Dobronov, of course, with his genius for sociological discoveries, who ferreted out the existence of a society which was a pioneer in the field of religion combined with politics which he and Guido were thirsting so violently to enter.

The Brothers and Sisters Society met regularly every other Monday night, and it was on the first Monday in December that Guido, Dobronov and Yomanato presented themselves for the first time at the door of the low-stooped brick-house, which, in defiance of modern custom, retained its old-fashioned iron railings, its gabled roof, its curious windows containing sixteen small panes set in a leaded frame.

The street upon which one looked out through these delightfully old-fashioned windows was one of the quaint, quiet streets of old Greenwich Village which, set a little aside from the bustle and turmoil of metropolitan life, seem to retain some of the restfulness and charm with which the modern mind loves to invest colonial life.

Dobronov, on writing the Society for particulars concerning its platform, had received in reply a mass of socialistic matter, and a letter from the President of the Society, who signed himself Dr. Elmer Sheldrake, inviting them to attend the next meeting at the Society House.

Copy of their platform was enclosed, which stated briefly that socialism, as conceived by the Brothers and Sisters, was not only not antagonistic to Christianity, but was its logical outcome—was, in brief, an investiture of government with Christian ideals.

Guido and his friends, perusing this pamphlet together, experienced the liveliest satisfaction, so delightful to the poor groping human soul is the discovery that other earnest seekers after the truth have emerged from their spiritual wanderings into the same oasis, rendered fruitful by the same waters of belief, the same ideals, the identical hopes.

The three friends, the Russian, the Japanese, the Russo-German-American, were therefore in the most hopeful and expectant frame of mind imaginable as they crossed the threshold of the Society House. The evening being warm, the door had been left partly ajar, so that entrance might be effected without summoning an attendant.

A tall, slender young man in a modish street suit stood in the hall at the foot of the stairs, gazing contentedly at a woman who stood on the first step resting her hand on the newel-post. The woman's back was turned, but Guido guessed her to be young from the shapeliness of the lithe figure. He noticed that she was of unusual stature, and felt a curiosity to see the face that belonged to this abnormally tall woman. Even allowing for the step on which she stood, the boy calculated that the woman was over six feet tall.

So intent was the young man and his tall companion upon their conversation that neither as much as glanced at the newcomers. It was easy to see, however, that the matter which engrossed these two so completely—whatever it was—did not fall in the category of social small talk or love-making.

As the honk-honk of a passing automobile died away, Guido caught something of what the young man was saying.

"You do our cause an injustice, Miss Maxwell, in keeping yourself in the background as you are doing. You know very well that whenever you show yourself in public you bring us more converts in an evening than we usually gain in a year."

"But," the woman rejoined in a rich, musical voice so

deep in register that it seemed more like a man's baritone than a woman's contralto, "I am very much opposed on principle to exploiting my own or anyone else's personality in the winning of converts. The Cause should stand on its own feet. Converts who are attracted by a personality, instead of by principles, are converts not worth having."

"Yet I was attracted first by your personality and only afterwards by your principles," the young man retorted.

"You! My dear child, you had worked out for yourself the principles of our platform before you ever came near the Society or heard of it, or saw me."

"Yes, that is true," the young man replied, "and there may be hundreds, thousands of other men and women who have done and are doing the same thing. But if the Society stands back and does not come forward to meet them, how are they to find it?"

"The Society, I think, is being pushed forward quite nicely by Dr. Sheldrake."

The young man made a gesture of impatience.

"Dr. Sheldrake is all very well," he said, "but you know perfectly that everyone, our president included, looks to you to further the interests of the Society."

"Now," the lady responded, "when you talk like that I must refuse to listen," and turning, she walked leisurely upstairs.

The young man, wearing a disappointed and baffled air, turned at last, and started at seeing three figures grouped about the hall employed in polite scrutiny of some old engravings and prints, representing historical sites, which hung about the walls.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "are you strangers? Can I do anything for you?"

Guido, who had previously been appointed spokesman by the others, said:

"Dr. Sheldrake kindly invited us to be present at this meeting in response to a letter of Mr. Dobronov." He indicated Sergius Ivanovich and then introduced Yomanato.

The young man's face lighted up. He fairly beamed with pleasure.

"Yes, yes," he said, "of course. I remember the letter perfectly. To be candid with you, I wrote it. I write all of Dr. Sheldrake's letters. I am his secretary. My

name is Max Liliencron. Need I mention my race? However, to be of a race frowned upon by many folks is no disqualification in our midst. Far from it. We welcome all races. The more extraordinary the race, the better. As our honorable president, Dr. Sheldrake, remarked not long ago, 'The more the merrier.' Meaning thereby our contingent of members racially as well as numerically considered. Dr. Sheldrake believes with Polonius that brevity is the soul of wit. But he is sometimes too brief to be explicit. However, I am always right at his elbow to elucidate. Dr. Sheldrake calls me his commentary. Miss Maxwell calls me his Boswell. I myself call myself his concordance. So, gentlemen, in my capacity as Dr. Sheldrake's commentary, Boswell or concordance, I welcome you." He turned and pounced on Dobronov. "We had several Russians," he said. "You are not the first." Then, turning to Yomanato, he cried, "But we have had only two Japanese before you and both died. I hope you won't die. We are awfully glad to have you with us. We've been promised a Chinaman for next month. A Hindu we already have. Also a Korean. I do hope you and the Korean will not conflict. So our human menagerie is now well-nigh complete. You," he said, to Guido, "are a German-American, are you not?"

"Like yourself," Guido replied, meaning to be agreeable.

"I? I am a Hebrew," Liliencron retorted with a resentful stare. "I will introduce you all to Dr. Sheldrake, if you will kindly follow me."

There were not more than fifteen or twenty people present in the room to which Liliencron led the way, and which was set with campchairs. The occupants of the room were segregated in little groups, and to one of these groups Liliencron led the way.

The men and women who made up this group were clustered about a youngish-looking man so short and slight of stature that he was not visible to the three social-bus-musketeers until the group had parted. He was holding forth on some subject apparently of great interest to his small audience.

"Dr. Sheldrake," Liliencron said, when the orator had finished, "allow me to introduce the three gentlemen whom

you were expecting—Mr. von Estritz, Mr. Dobronov, Mr. Yomanato."

Liliencron enunciated the three names with a succulent gusto that warmed one's heart to hear. Guido repressed a smile.

"Delighted, I am sure!" Dr. Sheldrake extended his hand with a gesture of fierce cordiality, and shook hands with each of the three converts in turn.

The men and women who had been gathered about Dr. Sheldrake fell away and turning to Dobronov, Dr. Sheldrake said:

"It was you, I think, who wrote me."

"Yes," said Dobronov, "but it is von Estritz who is responsible for our being here. Years ago I came to the conclusion that poverty must be practiced by the Christian who really desires to obey Christ. I espoused poverty, and almost wrecked my reason in pursuing first one religious theory and then another. Mr. von Estritz salvaged me, and subsequently pointed out a new interpretation of the Gospels to myself and to Mr. Yomanato, which satisfied me—us—that what Christ indicated in his teachings was not poverty so much as socialism."

"That is very interesting, very, very interesting," Dr. Sheldrake exclaimed, rubbing his hands gleefully. His eyes roamed about the room as if searching for someone. "You spoke of espousing poverty, Mr. Dobronov. Most of us have poverty 'thrust upon' us; you are, I think, the first person I have ever met who 'espoused' it."

"Well," said Guido, laughing, "that is just what he did. He's one of those disgustingly rich Russian grandees who own miles instead of mere acres of cultivated land, but he thought a rich man must be eternally damned, and so he turned himself into a beggar."

"Indeed—how very interesting," Dr. Sheldrake responded, aloofly polite. It was evident that he did not entirely believe in the Cræsus-like wealth of Dobronov. "Your first evening here, gentlemen, will be an interesting one. We have very important business on hand. Business which intimately concerns our little organization."

"It is very kind of you to admit us to such a meeting," Guido said, adding, a little uncertainly, "Do you not wish

to know more about us, Dr. Sheldrake, before admitting us to your little flock like this?"

"Oh, dear me, no! What an idea!" exclaimed the little gentleman, quite petulantly, and ran his fingers through his thin fair hair which stood about his head like a corona. "That is the beauty, my dear young men, of being socialists. Worldly considerations drive no one into our camp. By and by when we become popular, and have funds, and a little something to say in politics, we shall have to practice discretion in regard to newcomers. But not now, my dear sir, not now! But will you not tell me, Mr. von Estritz, since it is you who converted your two friends, what converted yourself to our way of thinking?"

"Matthew Nineteen," said Guido, laconically.

"Matthew Nineteen!" Dr. Sheldrake stared in comic bewilderment for a moment. Then he said, "Ah, I see—the eye-and-needle passage."

"Exactly," said Guido.

"I think, Mr. von Estritz," Dr. Sheldrake continued, "that you are going to be a very valuable addition to our society. Very valuable. Usually we have to go in search of converts, so seldom do they come in quest of us. Dear me, dear me, I do hope I do not impress you as being a little incoherent, gentlemen."

Guido assured him that he had not made that impression.

"The fact is," Dr. Sheldrake pursued, "I am prone to be a little incoherent. I am more than that, I am a little scatter-brained to-night. So much depends upon to-night. May I ask—are you pacifists?"

"We are," the three friends replied in unison.

"Delightful, delightful," Dr. Sheldrake cried. "Liliencron, my dear boy, will you not come here a moment?"

Dr. Sheldrake's commentary, Boswell and concordance appeared at his elbow.

"Liliencron, it will interest you to learn that the three gentlemen *are* pacifists," said Dr. Sheldrake, with a slight emphasis on the intransitive verb, as if the matter had been subject to discussion before the advent of the three friends.

"Of course they are pacifists," said the Concordance. "Every true socialist is a pacifist."

"Every true lover of humanity is a pacifist," said Guido.

"Every true lover of humanity is a socialist," said Dr. Sheldrake, and all laughed.

"You see, gentlemen," Dr. Sheldrake continued, "pacifism is the subject under discussion to-night. We believe that an overwhelming majority is with us—but we can never be quite sure. And we do not want our Society to be broken up again, do we, Liliencron?"

Boswell said that they certainly did not.

"At best we are not very strong numerically," Dr. Sheldrake pursued, "and it is such a pity, such a very, very great pity, don't you know, to allow our numbers to be further decimated by a foolish division. We should be harmonious, united, at one. I do so hope there will be no silly objections to pacificism."

"I do, too, with all my heart," said the Commentary.

"You see," Dr. Sheldrake went on, "we are just a small organization, just a teenie, weenie little baby society, and being broken up and losing half our members over some foolish split whenever we pass the hundred mark, is very bad for our communal health, very bad, indeed."

"Yes," said the Commentary, "it's rough on the real workers, chaps who work like Trojans and never spare themselves, and give time and money and sometimes health to further the Cause. And then to have unruly elements upset things is very painful and discouraging. Hereafter, I've suggested to Dr. Sheldrake, we must take time by the forelock, and whenever we discern any tendency toward unruliness, we must ask the unruly ones to leave us—to leave us at once."

Guido thought that this would be an excellent plan and said so.

"Well," said Liliencron, "I think we will weather the storm safely to-night. The Hichenses are with us, I am sure. Why," he said, interrupting himself, and dropping his voice to a whisper, "there are the Hichenses now—old Mrs. Hichens, too. It must be three years at least since she has been to a meeting."

Dr. Sheldrake plunged forward and ran to greet a party of four people, who made a truly remarkable group. Old Mr. Hichens was a man of perhaps four and eighty, tall, wrinkled, veined like old ivory, with a forehead like a dome. His countenance and manner were those of a

thinker. Guido put him down as a man of letters or a lawyer. He learned afterwards that Mr. Hichens had for years occupied the chair of Political Economy in one of the large Southern Universities. But, like Dobronov, he disliked all titles, even so innocuous a title as "professor," and insisted upon being addressed without that flourish.

Mrs. Hichens looked considerably younger than her husband, but was far more frail than himself. She was a pretty, dainty little lady, much encased in woolen mufflers and lace scarfs and crêpe de chine veils. Grandson and granddaughter were youngish replicas of the grandfather. Both were lithe, tall, gaunt, with brows that betokened that the intellect ruled supreme.

Guido was much impressed. He and his two friends found seats for themselves, and contentedly studied the men and women about them.

Never, Guido thought, had he seen an assemblage of more splendid men and women. Each bore the impress of daily high thinking, of daily kindness, of aims and ambitions untouched by selfishness and uncorroded by mercenary considerations. The tiny germ of fanaticism, which was beginning to send its roots into Guido's soul, hindered him from perceiving the presence of that germ, tiny in some, mighty in others, but present in all who were here gathered together. Highly spiritual they were, one and all, for fanaticism does not spread its net for earth-clogged souls. These it cannot use. Dross is too heavy a freight for its fine meshes to drag in—too heavy and too perishable. The stuff it works with is the stuff that saints and martyrs are made of. And who shall dare to affirm that the honest fanatic has not to his credit a great portion of the world's spiritual speeding up?

There was, in that assemblage of men and women, barely one face that did not make Guido wish to know its owner. Several clergymen there were of various nationalities, rugged men of single-hearted sincerity, purpose and kindness; a lawyer or two; one physician, one writer of international fame, several school-teachers; and one and all were earnest, unworldly souls honestly striving, by means of the "teenie weenie baby organization" to further the welfare of the human race.

Presently Miss Maxwell entered the room, and was

effusively greeted by two young girls who looked like teachers. Guido recognized her by her height, for he had not seen her face in the hall. He was now startled by the vigorous, full-blooded beauty of the woman who was so tall that the two others, although by no means short, looked like children beside her. Until that moment Guido had thought Janet the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. But Miss Maxwell was of so resplendent and commanding a presence, and was cast in so classic and heroic a mold that she seemed to Guido the very abstract of ideal womanhood, a sort of Greek goddess in whom physical beauty and mental development and poise were exquisitely balanced—Minerva and Juno blended into one, with scarce a touch of the allure of Venus.

She wore her hair in a heavy braid about her head, and Guido, whose quick eye knew to a certainty whether a woman's garb was fashionable or not, was puzzled by the peculiarity of her raiment. Her dark blue dress, made of a light woolen serge, with cuffs and collars of fine white linen, was perfectly plain. Her shoes were stout walking boots, and her hat a small, close-lying felt Alpine.

She fascinated him. He could not drag his eyes away from the splendid, competence-promising face. So completely was his attention focused upon her and away from himself that he was unaware that he was staring at her. He realized it when, the two young women having left her, she suddenly turned in his direction, meeting his eyes gravely. Guido reddened, and turned his eyes away. To his unutterable dismay he perceived that she was threading her way through the camp chairs, and was bearing down in his direction.

He had no very clear idea of what he expected, certainly nothing so crude as a reprimand for his curious stare. But nothing unusual happened. The lady, having reached him, calmly sat down at his side, and said, in the gentlest of tones:

"Mr. Liliencron suggested that I show you and your friends a little attention. Is there any way in which I can be of use?"

"It's awfully good of you," Guido stammered, inwardly cursing the wave of color that was surging to his very brow. Never had he felt so ridiculously juvenile. And

yet, now that Miss Maxwell was near by, he perceived that she was quite young—barely two or three years older than himself. "I'm wondering whether it's all right for us to be here," he said. "You folks have important business on, I know. And we are not certain yet about joining."

"We shall not expect you to join unless you feel quite sure that you want to," she responded, with grave gentleness.

"But my doubts as to the propriety of our remaining here are on your account, not on ours," Guido said. "You see, the fact is, neither my Japanese friend nor myself are Christians in the accepted meaning of the word."

"Neither are we Christians in the accepted meaning of the word," Miss Maxwell replied, softly. "That is just what our little society wants to impress upon people—that being a Christian does not consist in church-going and in being christened and in receiving Holy Communion."

"Yes, of course," Guido assented, "that is almost a truism, isn't it? Even among church people. But I felt I ought to mention that neither Yomanato nor myself have been christened, nor are we members of any church. My Russian friend has been christened into the orthodox Greek Church, but left it years ago and now thinks of joining the Friends. My Japanese friend in a year or so expects to join some Christian church. He is as yet undecided which he will join. He says he can be a good Buddhist and a good Christian at the same time."

"I have no doubt that is entirely true," Miss Maxwell said in response so quick that Guido realized the thought was not new to her, and he reflected that he must be singularly dull because he could not grasp what seemed so plain to others.

"I think," Miss Maxwell said, "if you have conscientious scruples about joining the Brothers and Sisters, you might come and see me some day and relate to me just what experience or line of thinking made you seek us out. I can then, perhaps, help you. Would you like that?"

Guido could only murmur:

"You are very good. I shall be only too happy to tell you about myself."

"Then come next Sunday evening," she said, and gave him her address.

The room was filling quickly. All told some forty odd people were now present. Liliencron announced that the doors would be closed so that the meeting might begin.

Guido never forgot the taste of that first meeting. It seemed to him—and he perceived that Dobronov and Yomanato were impressed in the same way—that he was breathing a rarer, finer, richer atmosphere. These men and women were so desperately in earnest. The Cause was to them something sacred—the one sacred thing in the world. They were tense with interest, and there was in their interest no selfish thought or ambition.

Dr. Sheldrake opened the meeting by inviting a free discussion on absolute pacifism.

"My own opinions on the subject are well known," he said. "I beg to say one word and one word only before the discussion begins. And that is this. Socialism, if it be real and not near-socialism, embraces pacifism. The reasons for the pacifist plank are too well understood by every socialist to require more than mere mention at this moment. The German socialists when the War began failed in their duty to the Cause; the French socialists failed in their duty to the Cause; the English and the Italian socialists failed in their duty to the Cause. Manifestly, even if we apply the political explanation to this war instead of the true explanation which shifts the causes underlying it to economic grounds, it is impossible for both the Allies and the Central Powers to be right. So that the socialists on one side or the other—always, for the sake of argument only allowing the political cause of the war to be an actual fact—have been guilty of a double, a treble breach of good faith.

"There is probably little doubt in the minds of all here present that before we are many months older America will have allowed herself to be dragged into the Witch's Cauldron.

"The question before us to night is: What will the official stand of the Brothers and Sisters be when that time comes?"

One of the clergymen rose to his feet as Dr. Sheldrake sat down.

"It seems to me," said the clergyman, speaking in the well-pitched voice of the trained public speaker, "that our

✓ duty is so plain as to make discussion superfluous. Either we are socialists—and Christians, or we are not socialists—and Christians. Socialism condemns war unqualifiedly. Did Christ sanction it? I think not. His entire energies while on earth were bent toward helping the poor—not toward crushing them down further and further into the pit of penury. What more, then, is there to say?"

A young man who looked like a lawyer sprang to his feet as the old clergyman sat down.

"My suggestion is," he said, "that we declare for pacifism if America is the aggressor, but in case America goes to war in self-defense, we should stand by her."

One of the young school-teachers who had spoken with Miss Maxwell timidly emerged from the seclusion of her chair.

"Germany claims that she is fighting in self-defense, and the Allies claim the same," she said. "If America goes to war she, too, will disclaim being the aggressor. No country will ever admit being the aggressor. At least not now-a-days. Whether this is a sign of ethical advancement, or whether it merely betokens progress in hypocrisy, I do not venture to say."

She sat down, blushing to the roots of her hair. Addressing her class had apparently not helped her to overcome a native shyness which was not unpleasant to the eye.

Dr. Sheldrake regarded her benignantly. His voice was fatherly, and so was his manner, as he replied:

"What you say is very true, very true."

Old Mrs. Hichens rose. She looked very frail indeed now that she was entirely unwrapped from all the veils and vests and scarfs in which she had been swathed. Her husband helped her to rise from her chair, and supported her while she was standing. In spite of his supporting arm, she swayed lightly to and fro while she spoke. A little hectic spot burned upon the wasted cheeks which were honeycombed by a myriad of very fine intersecting lines. All listened to the dainty old lady in profound silence.

"It is very hard for me to say what I am going to say," she began. "It is hard because my opinion will seem heretical to nearly everyone here, as it seems erroneous to my husband and to my grandchildren. But conscience, we all agree—no matter in what other particulars we differ

—is the one voice that should and must be obeyed. And obey it I must and will.

"War is a terrible thing. My husband and I lived through the Civil War. We—myself and my children—were in Vicksburg during the bombardment and lived, like the rest of the population, in holes dug into the ground. Whenever the enemy ceased bombarding us, we all crawled out and cooked ourselves something to eat, and sometimes we had time to gulp down our food before the firing resumed, and oftener we didn't. And we never knew from one moment to the next whether we would be alive or not. So you see we know what war means at first hand.

"But—are there not issues so big and so noble that war is justified? We were of the South, my husband and I, and my husband in those days fought on the Southern side, and so did my father and all my brothers—three of them, and all four never came back. We know to-day, my husband and I, that the North was right and the South was wrong. We also know—at least I do—that it was better that this dreadful war should have been fought and the slaves liberated than that that festering sore should have remained grafted upon our national life, or that the Union should have been disrupted. And strange as it may seem to all of you, although I know that my father and my three brothers died in a cause which I now condemn as immoral, I am glad they went and fought like men, because, at the time we all—they and my husband and myself—believed that the South was right and the North wrong."

She stopped a moment, seemingly overcome. Her voice had become husky, tears shone from her eyes. Her husband bent toward her and whispered something in her ear, but she shook her head and continued:

"I do not want you people to think that I was overcome just now my selfish recollections. I was speaking of my kith and kin, but I was not thinking of them. I was thinking of all the poor people in Europe, the Belgians, the French, the women and children of all countries who are suffering through this War, and the men who are fighting it. And I cannot help feeling that we, who are so far removed from the theater of war, who, even if we are drawn into the vortex cannot possibly suffer one-millionth part of what those unfortunates are suffering,

are doing wrong to condemn any man fighting for his country, for his home, for his wife and children. For we cannot bind ourselves to the fact that that is what the French and the Belgians, yes and the English, too, are fighting for."

For a moment after she stopped talking, there was a profound silence. Then the same clergyman who had spoken before, rose slowly and said:

"There is no doubt that the French and the Belgians *believe* that they are fighting to preserve their country and their homes. And our hearts go out to them in their dreadful agony. But this must not blind us to the fundamental principles upon which the creed which we profess is based—I mean the creed of socialism conjoined with Christianity. If America does go to war, and our men should refuse to fight, they will be martyrs to our cause quite as much as the men who die in battle are martyrs for their country's sake. Not for one moment do we believe that we can keep America out of the War by any resolution which we may adopt to-night. Not for one moment do we think that at this moment we can radically influence the course of events in any shape, way or manner. We are not even certain that, as matters now stand, we would wish America to keep out of the War. But we do think, and we do believe that if we stand solidly together and say, 'We, who are socialists and Christians, because we are socialists and Christians, dare not fight because our conscience forbids it,' we shall be acting as a leaven for the thought of the entire country. The seed we plant may not germinate to-day or to-morrow, but it will germinate. And then, if our men have been punished for refusing to fight, they will simply have done what they and we conceive to be their duty."

A murmur of approval swept through the room. The young lawyer sprang impetuously to his feet.

"I am willing," he cried, "I am entirely willing, if a Pacifist Resolution is adopted, to promise that, in case of war, I will resist enlistment though I be punished by imprisonment or even by death."

"And I am willing to do the same," a tall, stalwart young fellow boomed out in a voice as deep as an organ, and then sat down again.

The discussion continued. One or two voices—oddly enough the objectors were women—aligned themselves with Mrs. Hichens. It was then that Miss Maxwell rose and addressed the assemblage.

"I think," she said, "that there are a few things which we are not making sufficiently plain to ourselves. I take it that everyone here sympathizes with the Allies and not with Germany. It is unthinkable, of course, that it should be otherwise. But right here I want to say something that, in view of the universal sympathy which is being heaped upon the Allied Cause, will at first glance sound stony-hearted and cruel. Neither Belgium nor France need be in the plight in which they find themselves to-day!

"It is the great argument for this war, an argument which at first seems incontrovertible, that the Allies had to fight or go under.

"Now, did they?

"If Belgium had not fought, if she had allowed the Germans to march across the face of her fair country, what would have happened? To her, nothing. Her towns, villages and homes would be intact to-day. But it would have been so much worse for France, the apologists of this war exclaim. I am wondering if it really would. Supposing France had been taken unawares, supposing she had succumbed to the conquerors without being able to put up a fight, or if she had simply declined the duel on the grounds that she was 'too proud to fight,' would the result have been truly disastrous for her? I think not. Say Germany had annexed all of France, preposterous as that supposition is. Say she had peppered all France with German officials, German police, German teachers, German servants. The same thing that happened to the Normans who invaded England and 'conquered' England, would have happened to the German 'conquerors' of France. The conqueror would have been absorbed by the conquered, and the resulting strain might have given the world a new and a more capable breed of men than the world has yet seen.

"Moreover, the proletariat of these countries would have benefited by the amalgamation. Germany is a highly socialistic country. France is somewhat less so. If the two countries had been welded into one, the conjoined proletariat of both countries might have made such a social-

istic nucleus that an impetus would have been given to the Cause which it is impossible to overestimate. The exploited and the disinherited of the earth, instead of trusting each other the world over, are time and again lured into the same wretched trap. The word 'patriotism,' so noble in its highest interpretation, is degraded to cheapest clap-trap by the militarists and the capitalists of all countries. And the proletariat, poor, miserable and duped, allows itself time and again to be taken in, and fights the battle of the capitalists, and when whatever war happens to be on is over, the same capitalists for whom the proletariat has given its blood, continue their merciless exploitation of the poor fools who have risked their lives to secure Mammon on his throne."

"Beautiful, beautiful," Dobronov whispered in Guido's ear. Yomanato's brows were shifting curiously. Liliencron, who was sitting in back of Guido, leaned forward.

"Isn't she a corker?" he whispered in Guido's ear. "She's the finest speaker we have."

Guido did not reply. He had previously coerced himself into believing himself a pacifist. But he was considerably startled, not to say alarmed, by the vista of unsuspected and uninviting lanes and alleys, so horrifyingly easy of access from the broad highway of pacifism, which was being unrolled before him. Left to himself, his mind might have righted its disturbed equilibrium there and then. But he was under the strange spell of a homogeneously thinking crowd of people. The mystery of mass psychology yet awaits explanation. Whatever the pressure was to which he was being subjected, he succumbed to it.

"Well," said Dr. Sheldrake, when the three young men lined up to bid him good-bye. "Are we going to see you again?"

"I think so, I hope so, I am sure so," said Guido. "We were all very much impressed and, if I may say so, uplifted."

"Ah, I am truly glad to hear it," Dr. Sheldrake exclaimed. "I'll have Liliencron notify you of the date of our next meeting. And if I can be of service to you in the meantime, come and see me at my home."

The three young men went away in the happiest of moods. Whatever misgivings Miss Maxwell's strange words had

aroused in Guido had disappeared. The breath of the gods was in his nostrils and in the nostrils of his friends. They had drunk of nectar and eaten of ambrosia. The earth was theirs and the fullness thereof.

Thus did socialism become their avowed creed—their political and religious faith.

CHAPTER XIV

SELF-PROTECTIVELY, Guido refused to discuss his experiences at the meeting of the Brothers and Sisters with "unbelievers" like Dr. Koenig, Professor Geddes and even his own mother. To Frau Ursula, however, he hinted vaguely, through the channel of seemingly careless remarks, at what had happened. By his half-silence he compassed two things which he had not envisaged compassing. Frau Ursula became curious, and Frau Ursula, because curious, refrained from making grilling reflections upon socialism in general. Thus it happened one evening that he told his mother all about the first energizing, dynamic meeting.

Guido could see that his mother was impressed, although by no means convinced. She said nothing more unkind, however, than, "Those are beautiful thoughts, of course, but they can never be realized," a reticence for which Guido was grateful.

Elschen was delighted with Guido's report of the meeting, particularly with Miss Maxwell's address, which threw her into veritable transports of joy. That address, truth to tell, had moved Guido to more than a vague uneasiness. Now that the spell of the young goddess' dominant personality had been removed, and the potent pressure of fifty-odd enthusiastic souls had been eased, he realized that he was not at all in consonance with Miss Maxwell's remarkable utterances. But, of course, in the socialistic fold, as elsewhere, everyone has a right to his own opinions. So, at least, thought Guido.

Elschen begged hard to be taken to the next meeting. Her father had refused to allow her to attend any gathering of the Brothers and Sisters Society until Guido should have reconnoitered the ground. Like most Germans, he had strong socialistic sympathies, and while he refrained from joining a socialistic society, because he believed that, as a clergyman, he had no right to meddle actively with politics, he was tremendously pleased to think that Elschen had in-

herited his taste for a political creed which concerned itself exclusively with the lowly and the poor. He was almost tempted, in view of the dual character of the Society, providing as it did for an expression of Christian belief as well as of socialistic doctrine, to attend one of the meetings himself. Guido dissuaded him from the enterprise, pointing out to him that as a pastor of a German church, he had no right to endanger the political reputation of his congregation by allying himself with an organization of such pronounced pacifist proclivities that odium was sure to accrue to it as soon as America entered the War; an event which, all were agreed, was now merely a matter of time.

Guido went to see Miss Maxwell the following Sunday evening. She was a Settlement Worker, and lived in a model tenement house, in a tiny apartment which she had made as snug and as comfortable as possible. She had carried out her cultural ideals in equipping her home. The other apartments were occupied by Italians, Polish and Russian Jews of the lowest class, with a sprinkling of Irish. Her apartment consisted of two rooms and bath, and she had turned the larger room into a sort of Community Room. Bookcases were ranged along every wall, and the walls were literally covered with reproductions of famous paintings or pictures of historic buildings and classic statuary. In one corner stood a Victrola. Comfortable chairs were set around a long table, which ran almost the entire length of the room.

Miss Maxwell explained to Guido that this room was open every evening to anyone living in the building.

"We who have been accustomed to the privacy and seclusion which every refined home makes possible," she said, "find it hard to realize what spiritual hardship this absence of privacy foists upon those rare souls who, born and bred in the hovels of the poor, are making a valiant fight to better themselves spiritually and mentally, and, of course, materially as well."

Guido asked her which nationality came most frequently to the Community Room.

"The Jews," said Miss Maxwell. "They are a wonderful race. I have had Russian Jews come in here who could neither read nor speak English, and who came in to look at the pictures and hear the music—Thursday night is

Victrola night—and a year later they were reading Fiske's 'Cosmic Philosophy' or 'Ridpath's History of the World,' and understanding what they were reading, too. I mention this because it is not as self-evident as it would seem that a man should understand all he reads. I had one little Irish girl come in here and ask me for Milton's Latin prose. I didn't have Milton's Latin prose in my collection, and questioned her as to her reasons for such an unusual choice. Well, it seems she had made up her mind to read every line Milton had ever written before she was twenty-one. She didn't understand a word of Latin, but that did not matter. She was going to read right through Milton's Latin prose all the same."

"Did you persuade her to give up her plan?"

"No," said Miss Maxwell, with eyes very large and tender. "No. You see, she was a consumptive, and she didn't have more than half a year to live, at any rate. So, if having read Milton's Latin works along with his English poems was going to make her dying any easier for her, I saw no reason under the sun for depriving her of that bit of comfort. I procured the book from a friend, and she came here every evening after a hard day's work in a lead-pencil factory to read. I think she had a sort of superstition about Latin—the language of the Catholic service, you know. She finished her reading of Milton's Latin prose two days before she took to her bed, a week before she died. I really think that book helped to keep her going as long as she did."

Guido was deeply touched. Certainly Miss Maxwell's attitude toward these poor folks was that of a woman of extraordinary heart and mind. He thought her even more wonderful than before, and far, far more beautiful. But her beauty abashed him. He felt awed by it. It made him feel small and insignificant. It seemed to arrest in him some current of personality, to thwart some individual law of his own being.

"And now," she said, "come and sit down beside me and let me hear your confession of faith."

Guido slipped into the chair at her side, and after a momentary hesitation began his story.

He told her how, about a year ago, he had begun reading the Gospels very attentively, and how a little later, his

attention had been drawn to socialistic literature. At first, in reading the Gospels, he had thought that Christ, in his frequent and passionate references to the poor, was merely stressing the importance of charity—of good works. Some of the passages at that time had seemed to him exaggerated and impossible to obey. This was particularly true of the Nineteenth Chapter of St. Matthew.

And slowly, without ostentation, Guido began reciting the beautiful and baffling passages which had been so largely instrumental in his conversion to socialism.

"Those passages troubled me horribly," he said. "I delighted in the Six Commandments, with their wholesome expurgation of all the Old Testament Sabbath Day and Idolatry garnish—but the passages that followed hard upon bothered me. They bothered me cruelly. I dwelt upon them incessantly. It is easy enough, of course, for a rich man to give all he owns to the poor, but is any lasting benefit for the poor to be derived from such an action? I thought not. What then, did that exasperating passage mean?"

"Suddenly, one night, the meaning came to me. It meant socialism, of course. Christ had taught socialism. Socialism, to use the phrase which a little friend of mine coined after I had explained to her the aim of socialism, is nothing but Applied Christianity."

"Applied Christianity," Miss Maxwell exclaimed, in a startled tone. "What a pregnant phrase!"

"It seemed so to me," said Guido. "Well, once the Great Idea struck me, it was remarkable how simple all the difficult passages in the Gospels became. Why, the Gospels fairly breathe socialism. They are replete with it. They exude it, are permeated with it. What is the Golden Rule but an exhortation toward socialism? What is the Sixth of Christ's Commandments—I am not speaking of the Ten Commandments of Moses but of the Six Commandments of Christ—but socialism? 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' What is the Kingdom of Heaven but a condition of society attainable on earth if all men will labor to that end?"

"Through socialism alone can it be made practicable and possible for men to obey the Six Commandments of Christ. And yet Christians, the world over, lay an unaccountable

stress upon the Fourth Commandment given by Moses, 'Remember Thou to Keep the Sabbath Day Holy,' and all but ignore the Sixth Commandment of Christ, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'

"Rightly regarded, the two commandments are correlative, for the best, the right, the only way to keep the Sabbath Day holy and to keep every other day of the week holy as well, is to love your neighbor as yourself. It is very much easier, however, to go to church and abstain from labor one day a week, than to love one's neighbor as oneself seven days a week.

"Socialism would make possible a seven-days-a-week Christianity. It would mean that no just man need sit down to table knowing that not one, or ten, or a hundred, or a thousand, but tens of thousands of people the world over are going hungry that day and the day before and the day after.

"Socialism would make it possible to alleviate suffering and want the world over.

"Socialism is not merely Christianity applied, it is Christianity simplified and rationalized.

"It cannot be otherwise than that Christ had socialism in mind in preaching all he did preach. Peter and John, Christ's favorite disciples, after working the miracle reported in Acts 4, and being released by the Romans, prayed with the multitudes who were their followers:

"'And the multitudes of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any one of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things in common.'

"'And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made to every man according as he had need.'

"'Having land sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.'

"This," Guido continued, "of course, was communism, and while modern socialism is not communistic, communism was the earliest form of socialism.

"All in all, every devout seeker after the truth who does not allow himself to be blinded by religious—or rather, by

denominational—prejudice, if he will honestly apply the socialistic test to the Gospels, will, I think, come to the same conclusion that I have reached.

"If Christ's teaching means anything at all as regards our conduct on earth, it means that those who are serious in their desire to follow him, and to attain the kingdom of heaven, must bend their energies toward securing socialistic conditions.

"I wish I could make plain to others how deeply I feel this to be true. I would give my life to working for the Cause if it would help—my life and my fortune."

Guido's voice had gathered in passionate intensity as he spoke; the pale, handsome young face had flushed, the dark eyes shone with the fires of the soul.

Miss Maxwell touched his hand lightly with her own.

"Thank you for telling me all this, my friend," said. "You have related to me a very touching spiritual experience. This conviction, coming to you, as it did, without any extraneous influence, is, to use a religious expression, testimony of the most valuable sort."

She paused, and then added, quickly:

"Mr. von Estritz, I had the feeling that your story would be worth while and that is why I asked you to come here, where we would be quiet. I have an excellent memory. Will you allow me to use what I wish of your 'confession' in preparing leaflets to be used for propaganda purposes?"

Guido flushed with pleasure. He felt complimented by Miss Maxwell's suggestion, he told her.

"I shall use verbatim all you have told me as nearly as I remember your words," she said. "Your view-point is particularly interesting to me because I lean more to the economic viewpoint."

"I am afraid," Guido rejoined, "that I am very much of an amateur as yet. I have read Lasalle, and some of Marx, of course, but I say frankly that I do not entirely comprehend the economic side of socialism. It appeals to me primarily as a religion."

"You will have to read up on the economic side," said Miss Maxwell. "The subject is inexhaustible. You will hear a lot more of it at our meetings. I can give you a list of helpful books, if you wish."

Guido asked her to do so, and she sat down at once, and wrote out for him in a neat, small, literary hand some ten or twelve books of which Guido had never heard but which Miss Maxwell assured him would fortify his position enormously.

She had barely finished, when the bell rang, and, opening the door, Miss Maxwell admitted Liliencron and a young lady whom he introduced as Miss Levinsky.

Guido thought Miss Levinsky looked more like a human rosebud than anything else he could think of. She was decidedly Oriental in type, but her features were small, all excepting the enormous dark eyes which, heavily fringed with lashes, lay like a cordon of black silk against the delicately white skin and pink cheek. He gathered that Liliencron and Miss Levinsky were engaged.

Miss Maxwell had not expected the couple, and Liliencron, on entering, begged her not derange any program of talk which she might wish to carry out for the benefit of the neophyte. Miss Maxwell assured him that the neophyte had done quite as much instructing as receiving of instruction, and that small talk was in order.

The small talk turned out not to be so very small.

Tolstoy's "The Living Corpse" was being played in one of the Yiddish theaters downtown, and Liliencron and Miss Levinsky were thinking of seeing it. Miss Maxwell had not read the play and questioned Liliencron about it. Then Guido suggested that they make up a theater party to include Elschen—whom he explained to them as the friend who had decried Socialism as Applied Christianity—and Yomanato and Dobronov. Liliencron and Miss Levinsky acquiesced, but said plainly that they would insist on paying their own way. Miss Maxwell thought she would not have time to go.

"You young people need relaxation," she said, "but there are so many poor souls depending upon me—one evening is a dreadful lot of time to devote to pleasuring."

"You speak as if you were a hundred years old," protested Liliencron. "And with the exception of Mr. von Estritz, you are the youngest person here."

"I am cons older than any of you," Miss Maxwell retorted, smiling her rich, gracious smile. "You see," she turned to Guido, "the rest of you are Brothers and Sisters,

but I am the Little Cousin—the Little Cousin of the Social Revolution and the Little Cousin of all who work for it.”

Guido looked at her with eyes large and lustrous with the fascination of surprise and fright. “The Little Cousin of the Social Revolution” sounded ominously like “The Little Cousins of the Russian Revolution,” which was the name by which his mother and Dmitri Stepanovich had been known in those far-away days when the two Vasalovs had been the idols of the Russian Intelligentsia. Something cold struck at his heart. Was there any connection between that Cause and this? Was this similarity in nomenclature a mere coincidence? Did the similarity in terms betray a similarity of nature, a kinship unrevealed to his eyes, between the cause for which his mother had been sent into solitary confinement and this cause which but a moment ago had seemed to him a thing holy and sacred?

“Why do you always refer to yourself as ‘The Little Cousin?’” Liliencron asked the question which Guido lacked the courage to ask. “Brothers and Sisters are more closely related than cousins.”

“True!” Miss Maxwell smiled mysteriously. “I might as well admit at the outset that I am a plagiarist. Some years ago I met a Russian, a Prince Vasalov, a most interesting man. I was only a girl in my teens when I met him, but he said many things that made a lasting impression upon me, and I really think he had much to do with bringing me into the socialistic fold. Not that that would matter to him. He has probably forgotten all about me by this time. But one of his seeds which fell by the wayside happened to fall upon good ground and brought forth fruit. Well, Prince Vasalov had a cousin, a woman, whose last name was the same as his, and, at the time when I met him, she was languishing in one of those unspeakable Russian prisons, and if she has not died in the meantime, I dare say she is there still. Think of a woman, a woman who has been raised in luxury and plenty, being immured in one of those dank, dark, noisome cells for years and years.”

“Horrible,” said Liliencron.

“Well,” Miss Maxwell continued, “Prince Vasalov and his cousin, he told me, had been known throughout Russia

as the 'Little Cousins.' I raised the same objection to the term, Max, that you made a minute ago. Prince Vasalov replied that in the first place he and the Princess Vasalov were cousins, and not brother and sister, and in the second place, while it is true that brothers and sisters are united by a closer blood tie than cousins, yet, when the kinship is admitted, the term 'cousin' presupposes a kinship of spirit, of interest, of mutual responsibility which cannot be so readily admitted to obtain among brothers and sisters who, only too frequently, are at variance among themselves."

"That's a good thought," said Liliencron, approvingly.

"I remember hearing my father speak of the Little Cousins," said Miss Levinsky. "You know, I can barely remember Russia. Only the day of the pogrom, when all my brothers and sisters were killed and my parents and myself escaped only because we were not at home, stands out in my memory like forked lightning. I remember seeing the bodies of the slain—four sisters and one brother—as we entered our dining-room on reaching home. My mother fainted dead away. I was only five years old, and I remember that my father clapped his hand over my eyes to shut out the horrible sight——" She stopped, overcome by the ghastly recollections which surged back to her memory. After a moment she burst out explosively:

"Oh, sometimes I hate myself for staying here—here, where one is safe and unmolested. I know that revenge is a bad sentiment to nourish, but when I think of those five mutilated bodies—I see red; I tell you, I see red."

"Don't think about it, Olga," said Liliencron. "You cannot bring back the dead. It would be different if, like Vasalov, you hoped to liberate someone from prison. All we can do is to work for the future."

"Yes," said Miss Maxwell, "we, who enjoy comparative liberty, must work and work hard for the complete emancipation of the human race. Once we are really free, once we are a true democracy, we will indeed be able to 'proclaim liberty throughout the world and unto all the inhabitants thereof.'"

Guido had listened to all this in anguish of spirit indescribable. His head was whirling. He was entirely adrift. Emotion had rendered his voice husky, so that,

when he essayed to speak, he produced only a thick, indistinguishable sound such as a laryngitis sufferer might have produced. He cleared his voice, while three pairs of eyes regarded him—as he thought—inquisitorially.

"I thought," he said, addressing Liliencron, "that socialists were averse to violence."

Liliencron did not understand at once. Then, after a moment, he said:

"You mean as regards liberating a prisoner? Well, in a country like Russia, where government is not merely a despotism but a tyranny, where the police at best arrest men and women who have been caught in a street crush—because they take it for granted that they are 'politicals' who are rioting—and at worst club them to death; where a professor of—let us say—mathematics is not permitted to invite ten or fifteen students to his home to explain some difficult problem which they are unable to master in class, because of the same, insensate fear of political intrigue, violence is of course permissible."

"Assuredly," Miss Maxwell commented. "If I were a Russian I would be a nihilist and kill off just as many of those government monsters as I possibly could before they deported me to Siberia. In a country like ours, where there is universal manhood suffrage, with universal woman suffrage coming, assassination, like the execution of the Duc d'Enghien, is worse than a crime, it is a blunder."

"But," said Guido, "if violence is justifiable when there is adequate aggravation, why then pacifism?"

Liliencron and Miss Maxwell exchanged glances of surprise.

Both began simultaneously with "Because." Then Liliencron stopped talking, and bowing to Miss Maxwell, with a gesture of the hand invited her to continue.

"Pacifism is not non-resistance," said Miss Maxwell, after a brief pause. "Socialism adopted the pacifist plank because the economic interpretation of history proves that the proletariat of all countries at war are the real victims of the war, and the capitalists of all countries at war are the real beneficiaries of the war—no matter what the outcome ultimately is. But in resisting tyranny, the proletariat is fighting its own battle. All this will be made perfectly



plain to you when you read some of the books whose titles I have written down for you."

The talk drifted to other topics with Guido a halting participant. The shock which he had sustained had inhibited his power of thought. The best he could do was to make a feint at listening attentively to what the others were saying.

As he became calmer, and was able to follow the conversation more closely, it seemed to him that there was a curious, ever vigilant, never varying undercurrent of thought which threaded its way in and out of every topic that was broached. No matter what subject came up, it was viewed through the socialistic glass. English poetry, Greek art, German philosophy, French architecture—everything under the heavens, it appeared, could be elucidated by applying the Economic Interpretation of History.

Guido was bewildered and jarred. He had been so happy, so superlatively happy on the evening of that wonderful meeting. Had he, after all, made a mistake? He could not have told what apperceptive power now warned him, what instinct of caution now whispered to him not to be too certain that in socialism he had found the universal panacea.

The impression which he carried away with him from that evening's conversation was that of nimble and keen-edged mentalities, which, through some spiritual accident, had become slightly dislocated, slightly aberrant, slightly out of alignment with real life.

He and Dobronov and Yomanato had already sent in their applications for membership, together with checks for the annual dues. On the whole Guido did not regret that the step had been taken which was to make him a member of the Brothers and Sisters Society. He wanted to be magnanimous, and he blamed himself alone for this feeling of askewness.

He had, of course, been frightfully startled and stunned by the unexpected references to Varvara Alexandrovna, and on thinking the occurrence over during the week that followed, he came to realize poignantly that these new friends of his, if they had only known whose son he was, would have regarded him with scathing contempt for not going to Russia and attempting to liberate his mother,

especially as he had ample means to hazard such a venture. He recalled the story which Frau Ursula had told him of his father's rescue of Varvara Alexandrovna from Siberia. If one rescue had been feasible, why not another? He questioned himself very earnestly whether he had not done a monstrously wrong and selfish thing in refusing to accompany Vasalov to Russia. Vasalov, it is true, had made no mention of an attempt to free Varvara Alexandrovna. His entire talk had been of Russia's future. It had remained for his socialist friends to drop that plummet into his soul, where it was stirring up some of the most painful reflections to which Guido had ever fallen prey.

The evening of the theater party arrived. Elschen, who had not yet met Miss Maxwell, was very much impressed by her personality, as Guido could see by the look of admiring awe that came into Elschen's artless face on being presented. The three women slipped into adjacent seats. Liliencron sat beside Miss Levinsky, Guido next to Elschen, with Miss Maxwell between the two young women, and Yomanato and Dobronov on Guido's further side.

The theater was one of the poorer theaters of the East Side, and the audience, as it came trooping in, eyed the interlopers who so evidently belonged to another world with amazement and something like veiled hostility and suspicion.

The musicians crawled into the tiny enclosure reserved for them and began to tune their instruments. Presently the strains of the Star-Spangled Banner penetrated through the harsh discord of noisily chatting voices. Automatically Guido, Dobronov and Yomanato rose from their seats. Almost immediately someone plucked Guido by the sleeve and glancing sideways, Guido perceived that Miss Maxwell was bending toward him. He then noticed that Liliencron and the three young women had not risen from their chairs, and for one moment he thought that he had made a mistake in the tune. He had no ear at all, and Janet had been in the habit of comparing him to the man who knew only two tunes—"Hail Columbia," and the other. But a glance at the auditorium reassured him. He had made no mistake. Why, then, had his friends not risen along with the rest?

He inclined his head to catch what Miss Maxwell was saying.

"Sit down," she said. "Why do you get up and stand for mere music? Is this tune any better than any other? We never get up for a national hymn."

Guido flushed.

"I always do," he said, quietly, "for *our* national hymn."

Baleful glances and angry jibberings in garlic-laden voices began to be heard in back of them. One heavy-jowled man, poking Guido roughly in the ribs, indicated the occupants of the seats with his thumb.

Guido shrugged his shoulders. The man perceived his annoyance, and became good-natured. He, too, with a grin, shrugged his shoulders, and the disturbance which Guido had feared, did not occur.

He had an uncomfortable feeling all through the performance that Miss Maxwell was half-hiding, half-betraying—both purposely, the thought—a subtle amusement in his behavior. In consequence he felt awkward and ill at ease, and he was thankful when the lugubrious performance, of which no one but Dobronov and Miss Levinsky understood a word, was over.

Liliencron suggested that they go to a nearby restaurant "for a bite." Elschen seemed as eager to go as the rest, and nothing remained for Guido but to comply with the unspoken wish in Elschen's eyes.

Miss Maxwell cleverly maneuvered for a chair next to Guido.

"Well," she said, "I see you still cling to a good many erroneous ideas. You will have to get rid of them if you intend to be a good socialist."

Guido did not pretend to misunderstand her.

"I do not quite understand why you objected to seeing me on my feet," he said, quietly.

"The same objection I would feel if I saw you saluting the American flag. May I inquire—do you salute it?"

"I have never had occasion to salute it," said Guido. "If the occasion were to arise, I most certainly should salute it."

"Fetich-worship, my dear lad, fetich-worship!" Miss Maxwell smiled indulgently. "We socialists partake of the nature of the iconoclasts—we must do nothing to help

prolong or perpetuate these outworn symbols and usages which gag and bind society at large."

"I am afraid I do not agree with you there," said Guido, in a tone which was new to Miss Maxwell. She had thought him wholly pliable. It annoyed her to encounter gristle and bone where she had anticipated to find nothing more rigid than marrow. The smile faded slowly from her lips. She turned and looked him full in the face.

"Why not?" she demanded, her voice touched with a slight frost.

"Because America is our country, and if we love it, as I am sure we all do, there is no reason that I can see why we should refuse the visible tokens of respect which custom prescribes."

"You may love America all you wish," said Miss Maxwell, a little contemptuously, Guido thought, although he may have been unjust in thinking so, "but a good socialist does not pin his faith to any national emblem or symbol."

Miss Levinsky leaned forward across the table, and thrusting her voice at Guido, said:

"I was wishing they would mob us."

"Well, I'm glad heartily they didn't," Guido replied, shortly.

"I am afraid you are not the stuff that martyrs are made of," Liliencron contributed. There was no ill-nature in his voice.

Guido smiled.

"I'm afraid I'm not," he said. "As a child I used to think that the men and women who allowed themselves to be burned at the stake sooner than recant were quite as bigoted as their executioners."

"Oh!" Miss Levinsky and Miss Maxwell expressed their abhorrence for such nambi-paminess by pursing their lips and opening wide their eyes.

"There is something in that," said Liliencron. "I certainly would not have gone to the stake for the sake of religion. For the socialistic idea, *perhaps*. *Perhaps*."

His intonation of the two "*perhapses*" caused a general smile. The tension was broken. Miss Levinsky said, in a tone decidedly less bellicose than before:

"Well, I feel very strongly on the subject of flags and

national hymns. Personally I would sooner go to jail than salute the flag."

"I would sooner die than salute it," said Miss Maxwell, in the tone of high tragedy.

"There is one thing to be said for us," said Dobronov, "we, perhaps, do not believe in wasting our energy on a matter which, after all, is of small consequence."

"There is another thing to be said for us," said Yomanato. "Courtesy required that we rise. I, for one, therefore cannot regret having done so."

Miss Maxwell frowned. She resented Yomanato's rebuke and a momentary flashing back of her lips and heightened color betrayed her mortification.

"I," said Elschen, "was glad I had the courage not to get up. I think it so perfectly silly—this standing up when the Star Spangled Banner is played, as if one were in church."

The waitress came for their order, and thus another field of conversation was opened. The talk lightened after that, and the subject was not referred to again.

But it troubled Guido. It troubled him so greatly that, after mature reflection, he decided to avail himself of Dr. Sheldrake's invitation to call at his home if in need of advice.

Dr. Sheldrake, who was a minister, lived not far from the Society House, in an apartment built into the gabled roof of the little church of which he was the rector. The stairs that led to this unique apartment were narrow and steep, and Dr. Sheldrake, awaiting his visitor at the head of the interminable stairway, broken by three landings, said jocosely, as he warmly grasped Guido's hand:

"Narrow and steep as the road to heaven, I tell those of my visitors who are good enough not to be discouraged from calling by the strenuous ascent. Come in, my young friend, come in. I am heartily glad to see you."

He led the way through a hall into which the light shone through a stained-glass window representing John the Baptist, into the largest room which Guido had ever seen. One corner of the spacious apartment evidently constituted Dr. Sheldrake's den, and it was, Guido thought, quite the deniest den he had ever entered.

The hardwood floor was covered with small rugs, all

Navajo Indian rugs, as Guido learned later on, made by the Indians from old uniforms, and woven into patterns displaying sacred emblems of their tribe. The room ran the entire depth of the church, and was a hall rather than a room. The mission furniture suited admirably in effect with the many-angled, slanting walls of the huge apartment, with the low, broad windows set into the gables, beneath which ran ease-promising window seats upholstered in russet leather to match the seats of the capacious chairs, which were arranged in sets near tables of varying sizes—tables, which apparently served various functions. These groups of furniture stood in different corners of the enormous room, giving the impression of a number of small rooms waiting to be shut off by sliding doors into comparative privacy, and this impression was further heightened by the presence of no less than three open fire-places, which served as natural centers for the different groups of furniture. In one of these open fire-places a cannel coal fire was blazing, but radiators, running two pipes high along the walls, indicated that the Sheldrakes were not wholly dependent upon the fire-places for warmth.

"Quite a big room, what?" Dr. Sheldrake demanded, seeing Guido's glance wander involuntarily through the room in search of boundaries, as it were.

"I've never seen so big a one," said Guido. "It's wonderful. It's like a hall in an English country-house."

"You've hit it to a T," said Dr. Sheldrake. "I love this room. So does my wife. So do my two little girls. It's the only thing that reconciles us to living in this attic. The sleeping-rooms are mere bunks, the dining-room a sort of buffet lunch car—but we never use it, excepting as a pantry—and the kitchen—ah!" he interrupted himself, "only a woman's tongue can do justice to that kitchen. We have often speculated as to the dimensions of the human being who planned it. The faucets for both tubs and sink are so high that we've had to build a sort of footstool or platform upon which to stand while the delicate tasks of washing dishes and clothes are in progress. That would not have been so great a hardship—for we make light of the tumbles and stumbles which we suffer every day in stepping onto and down from this platform as we scurry from sink to stove, and from stove to sink—

were it not for the painful fact that the particular angle which harbors sink and tubs is quite unconscionably low, so that in adding a foot to the flooring we have subtracted a very necessary foot from the ceiling. At first my poor wife and my older girl were in a chronic state of black and blueness, and my younger and shorter daughter—a child who is too good to be true—undertook to do all the dishwashing, while my wife and elder daughter, when engaged at the tubs, by dint of mutual reminders, contrived to escape severe contusions. But this sort of arrangement became very arduous after a while, and I finally hit upon the brilliant idea of nailing bags, stuffed with cotton, against the offending gables, making a sort of padded cell—at least ceiling-wise—of the sink and tub corner of our kitchen, thereby very materially diminishing the danger of concussion of the brain to which we are all continually exposed."

Dr. Sheldrake delivered himself of the above with a funereal countenance, and Guido, suppressing little flurries of laughter that would rise, inquired whether it was not possible to have the faucets lowered.

"That brilliant idea occurred to us, of course," Dr. Sheldrake replied. "But you know what the management of church property is, or rather, you do not know. Thank heaven you do not. If it were merely a matter of having the plumber in to attend to the thing for us, why, we would have lived on red pottage and bread and oleo for a week in order to pay for the job. But my contract stipulates expressly that I must make no alterations in this apartment without special permission of the powers that be. It seems that a former pastor had a wall knocked out in order to secure at least one sleeping-room large enough to accommodate both a bed and a bureau. A stained-glass window of which the church was particularly proud was demolished during this alteration. Hence all successors of this temerarious incumbent are forced to swear away all rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of sound limbs. At various times I have been promised that the altitude of the faucets shall be lowered, and about a month ago it seemed that our long-deferred hopes were about to be fulfilled. Then, alas, I preached a sermon ill-advised from the worldly point of view. The congregation thinks me

entirely too socialistic. I have been requested a dozen times at least to moderate my tone. I have been censured every Sunday of my life by someone since coming here. My congregation, in fact, is a congregation of carping cavilers, of censorious old maids of both sexes. Which, sir, which," cried Dr. Sheldrake, waxing eloquent quite suddenly, "is the very reason I will not leave this post. Mercenary considerations are nothing. I could do better from a worldly point of view elsewhere. But these Philistines, these Pharisees, need me. I am in an enemy country. I am doing foreign mission work right here in the heart of New York City. And the congregation grows. Yes, sir, you may not believe it, but it grows! Ever since I came we have gained steadily. Our pews can hardly accommodate the congregation plus the visitors. To the disgust of the old members of the church. They do not like new faces any more than they like new ideas. And that, sir, in brief," cried Dr. Sheldrake, running his fingers through his fair, thin hair, so that it stood out about his head most alarmingly, "is the reason why the faucets in my wife's kitchen must remain at bunk-head level."

"Atrocious," said Guido.

"You may well say so," said Dr. Sheldrake. "I am aware that the difference between myself and the Church-members is not lacking in some of the more delicate elements of humor, and as myself and my family are by no means destitute of a sense of the comic, we perceive the humorous as well as the painful side of the quarrel."

"Why not appeal to the Board of Health?" Guido suggested.

"I think not. After our heads are fractured, we shall, of course, have an excellent case against the Church. But I trust that that contingency will not occur."

Guido said he sincerely hoped it would not.

"And now," said Dr. Sheldrake, "what can I do for you?"

Guido was almost ashamed to bring his own troubles before a tribunal so harassed by acute personal grievances as Dr. Sheldrake. He said so, not ungracefully. Dr. Sheldrake thereupon exclaimed, with a sort of kind eagerness:

"My dear young friend, if you feel that way you shall make me ashamed of myself. Indeed, if you state your

own troubles, you will help me bear mine, for it is an uncomfortable truism that human nature, even at best—and I disavow falling in that category—finds solace prodigious and indescribable in the contemplation of the ills which befall others."

Guido laughed.

"Well," he said, "I hope I may cheer you up considerably. The other evening—" and he narrated the Star Spangled Banner episode as well as the subsequent remarks touching salutations of the American flag.

Dr. Sheldrake frowned. He brushed his lean fingers through his thin growth of hair incessantly. Suddenly, he turned in his chair, and invited Guido to follow the direction of his eyes. Guido obediently turned also, and looking back through the doorway through which he had entered saw above it an American flag, and near it flags and banners which he did not recognize, but which seemed to him to be college insignia.

"That answers you," Dr. Sheldrake said. "You must not receive the impression that you cannot be a good American and a good socialist, too. Our country, I honestly believe, is quite the best in the world. I love it. I have taught my children to love it and to honor our flag. But it does not follow that I do not discern wherein its laws and its administration and the conditions under which the poor are forced to subsist might be bettered.

"As to saluting the American flag, I see nothing improper in doing so. And upon the rare occasions when we have the price of theater tickets, both my wife and myself rise when the national hymn is played."

"I am very glad I came to see you," said Guido, "for I can tell you frankly, sir, if I were forced to choose between socialism and Americanism, I would not choose socialism."

"Ah!" said Dr. Sheldrake in a perfectly neutral tone.

"And while I am in the confessional," Guido continued, "I would like to add that I do not think I am a very good pacifist."

"Ah!" said Dr. Sheldrake again, but this time his tone was far from being neutral.

"Is that being a very bad socialist, indeed?" Guido ventured to ask.

Dr. Sheldrake did not reply. His nervous fingers combed his hair with an energy and a celerity extraordinary to behold. Presently, having combed his corona of pale hair from left to right and from right to left and forward and backward and every which way, he began:

"Pacifism," he said, "extreme, absolute pacifism is not an easy doctrine to adhere to. Far from it. We live in such an atmosphere of violent partisanship, of selfish greed, of desire for individual and national aggrandizement, that it is extremely difficult to purge our hearts of all the turbulent emotions which are inimical to the pacifist frame of mind. Very difficult it is to do this, very difficult indeed," he repeated, taking up some papers that lay upon his desk and laying them down again with the same unconscious display of spiritual tumult which had characterized the manipulations of his hair.

"There are moments," he continued, "when my own pacifism is not all that might be desired. I grieve that it should be so, but truth compels me to admit that it is so."

"Judging from the stand you took the other evening," Guido said, not veiling his surprise, "I thought that you were quite an irrevocable—I should like to say, an infallible—pacifist."

"Infallible!" Dr. Sheldrake's fingers were again busy with his hair. "Infallible!" he repeated, explosively. Then he sat down as abruptly as he had risen. "No one is infallible, excepting Christ. And even Christ—he scourged the money-changers from the temple."

Guido sat very still. He was abashed. He was frightened. Spiritual modesty, so strong an element in his moral composition, cried out to him that he must stop this man, so much older than himself and a minister of the Gospel, from further unbosoming himself. Individual conceit, absent in none of us, took joy unutterable in the flattery implied by the confidence which the clergyman was showing him by his candor. The better instinct triumphed, but the *gaucherie* which inheres in youth placed beyond the lady's diplomatic reach the tact required to avert a catastrophe of Dr. Sheldrake's confession.

"That passage, of course," Dr. Sheldrake continued, "like everything else which it does not suit one to believe, can be explained away quite beautifully. But the point is: Are

those explainings-away honest, or are they not? I confess, I can reach no ultimate decision. That one passage has made me more miserable than any other text in the entire Scriptures, and, heaven knows, that is saying much, very much."

Guido moistened his lips. His rigid sense of personal honor bade him imperiously to cry a halt in one way or another to this remarkable flow of confidences in which Dr. Sheldrake was indulging himself so unexpectedly.

"I have a friend who explains it by saying that Christ, in a moment of natural, human weakness, violated his own teachings," he said, feeling as if he were using a physical thrust to make his words impose themselves upon Dr. Sheldrake's consciousness.

"H'm." Dr. Sheldrake regarded Guido, somewhat startled. "Just so," he said. "As I remarked before, the passage is susceptible of all sorts of explanations. But—was it meant to be explained away—was it?"

Guido did not reply. He was filled with dismay.

"Of course," Dr. Sheldrake continued, "to an extremist like Hypatia such slight discrepancies do not matter. She brushes them aside, lightly."

"Hypatia?"

"Miss Maxwell, of course. We call her 'Hypatia.' She likes it."

"How does *she* brush it aside?"

"Oh—the money-changers represent the capitalists, and as she is not averse to extreme measures, she contends that Christ not merely behaved logically in chastising the usurers, but lent countenance to all extreme measures which may from time to time appear desirable in furthering the Cause."

"But that is anarchism," Guido cried, aghast, "and Christ was no anarchist."

"No," said Dr. Sheldrake, with great emphasis, "Christ was no anarchist. Most decidedly not. Most decidedly not. But Hypatia, as I said before, is an extremist. Now our organization is not a militant organization. Our sole aim is to prepare the soil for the socialistic era, so that when the time shall have become ripe the change from individualism to socialism may be accomplished as an evolutionary, not as a revolutionary method. But I sometimes

fear that Hypatia thinks this far too tame. She is mixed up with other organizations—I wish she weren't. Our little organization should remain as it is, not militant, although vigilant, decrying revolution, but preaching evolution, not hating the rich, but loving the poor."

"Yes, of course," said Guido, heartily.

The sound of Guido's voice seemed to recall Dr. Shelldrake to himself. He combed his long fingers through his hair, twice, thrice, before speaking.

"You have come here crying for bread and I am afraid I have given you a stone," he said, kindly. "Doubt comes to all of us, but it behooves us to expunge it mercilessly, when we know that the doctrine which we doubt has been accepted as an essential plank—speaking politically, as a necessary dogma—speaking religiously—by thinkers far more profound than ourselves."

He rose, and went to the book-case so overstocked with books that the volumes for which there was no orthodox space had been laid on the tops of their more comfortably housed brethren, or plastered in front of them, and wedged in behind them. From this motley assortment of tomes, with a swiftness and a certainty at which Guido could but marvel, Dr. Sheldrake extracted a good-sized book. This he handed to Guido.

"Take it along and read it," he said. "Rogers is masterly—masterly. He is not a socialist, I think, and yet to me, his book, dealing as it does with the economic interpretation of history is as great a bulwark of socialistic doctrine as Marx's capital. Read it slowly. Digest it. It will, I think, make the utter futility of the political interpretation of history perfectly plain to you. All the rest, then, will be easy."

Guido thanked him and rising, was about to take his departure, when the door was flung open and a lady, accompanied by two young girls, entered. Dr. Sheldrake introduced Guido. The lady was his wife and the two girls his daughters, Flo and Mazie.

Mrs. Sheldrake was a quiet, shy little woman of exquisite refinement and delicacy. Flo was a girl of about sixteen, a limply hung, almost diaphanous Burne-Jones beauty, with a mass of fair hair and very pale blue eyes which gave her white, slender face an almost unearthly

beauty. Mazie, the child who "was too good to be true," was a little girl of eleven or thereabouts, who, in a childish way, represented the same type of limp loveliness as her sister. She wore her hair in long curls of excessive fairness, but her eyes were bright with health and her cheeks a lovely soft red.

Little girls always appealed to Guido, and before he knew it, he was deep in conversation with little Mazie, who told him how she had just finished reading *Peter Pan*, and thought it the wonderfulest book she had ever read, and how her father had promised her *Praps, Praps*—if he had time, and she was a good girl—he would take her to see the play.

"Perhaps," said Guido, glancing at Dr. Sheldrake, "your father, if he has not time, will allow me to take you and your sister to see the play."

"It's not to be thought of," said Dr. Sheldrake, decisively. Guido perceived that he had dropped a brick, though he could not have told how or why. The fact is, it was not dearth of time which had caused Dr. Sheldrake to insert the "perhaps" in his promise to take his youngest daughter to the theater, but dearth of quite another commodity, and believing that Guido had guessed the truth, from a remark he had previously made, the little man was considerably mortified.

Guido reddened and looked unhappy—so unhappy that the kind-hearted clergyman, wishing to smooth matters over, said to his wife:

"Mary, is it convenient to ask Mr. von Estritz to lunch with us?"

"Perfectly, if Mr. von Estritz will not mind a very plain luncheon," Mrs. Sheldrake replied with a smile which Guido mentally labeled as "dear."

"Indeed," stammered our hero, "I shall be very grateful to you for the opportunity to talk a little longer with Dr. Sheldrake and all of you."

The luncheon, which, Flo laughingly reported, had cost only two bumps against her own head, and a mere love-pat upon her mother's, was served in a corner of the large living-room near the fire-place in which the fire was burning. Little Mazie set the table, and Dr. Sheldrake toasted the bread over the open fire. Guido, after a momentary

attack of shyness, ventured to the door of the tiny uncomfortable kitchen and begged to be permitted to do his share. So Flo asked him to whip the cream which was to be added to the mayonnaise dressing for the fruit salad, and Guido, for the first time in his life, acted as assistant cook. He enjoyed the experience immensely. It was the last touch needed to make him feel that this menage, with its gables, and Indian rugs and strange outward opening windows, and Mission furniture and stone fire-places seemed a sort of toy house lifted bodily from the pages of one of the magazines devoted to furniture and interiors and gardening.

He was therefore hardly surprised when the child Mazie, who seemed more like an elf than a real child, led him to the windows which opened away from the street, and pointing to the broad, sloping roof, invited him to peer out upon its broad expanse.

"That," she said, "is where our garden blooms in spring and summer and autumn; there are crocus and daffy-down-dillies in spring, and ramblers and nasturtiums in summer, and in autumn royal sage and dahlias. And pansies all through the season."

"How do you manage it?" Guido inquired.

"Oh, Father manages it all right, the child replied, laughing. She gave a peculiar rolling sound to the second "r" in father which gave a sense of endearment to the word, as if she were loth to let it escape her lips too quickly.

Flo announced that luncheon was served. Luncheon turned out to be a meal far from meager, but also far more dainty than the substantial midday meal served at Frau Ursula's table.

There was the fruit salad, for which Guido had whipped the cream, and there was lettuce with it, and a big jar of marmalade and cream cheese and crackers. There was also a very delicious omelette served with water cress, preceded by a cup of clear broth which Guido could not have named.

The combination of cream cheese and marmalade was new to Guido, and Dr. Sheldrake told him that they had picked up the custom of serving the two together in England, when they traveled and visited there five years ago.

Guido asked to be told "all about England," a demand which caused an outburst of good-natured laughter, in which Guido joined.

"I mean, of course," he said, "Shakespeare's England, Thackeray's England, Meredith's England."

"And Dickens' England," Mrs. Sheldrake threw in. "Don't tell us you don't love Dickens best."

"Not better than Shakespeare," said Guido, "and not better than Meredith. I confess, it is always an effort for me to read Dickens. I think I enjoy Dickens most after I'm through with him."

This caused another round of laughter, and Mrs. Sheldrake accused Guido of being a humorist.

"I'm afraid you are placing too lenient a construction upon a loosely worded sentence," Guido rejoined, and explained that in every art there were works which he found he enjoyed thoroughly while engaged in reading, or seeing, or hearing them, but which seemed unprofitable in retrospect; while other productions—bigger productions, perhaps—which had seemed stale and flat at first, yielded pure gold at the touch of memory. The latter, he thought, enriched and fecundated the mind. So that in saying that he enjoyed Dickens most when he was through with him, he had really paid Dickens the highest compliment of which he was capable.

"That is a very shrewd remark," Dr. Sheldrake said, approvingly. "Would you like to join the Dickens Fellowship? Or the Shakespeare Club? I can introduce you to either, or to both, if you wish."

Guido thanked Dr. Sheldrake, but thought he would wait a while until he was through with his studies. There was much hard work to be done during the present and the ensuing year.

The talk drifted back to England. Dr. Sheldrake, ably seconded by his wife, related anecdotes of curious little things that had happened to them while in Britain. Guido listened hungrily. How real, and yet how ideal England seemed to him. Strange, he thought, passing strange, that he who had not a drop of English blood in his veins should so love the mother-country; for if England was not in his physical blood, it was in his spiritual blood.

in the blood that nourished his brain and his heart and his soul.

How, in the name of all that is wonderful, could anyone who loved the great English classics—the greatest literary classics of all the world—not love England, also?

Guido had an engagement to go to the matinee with Yomanato, for the day was Saturday. He excused himself shortly after luncheon. On his way to the theater where he was to meet the Japanese, he stopped and purchased three tickets for "Peter Pan," for the following Saturday matinee. He dispatched these by messenger addressed to Mrs. Sheldrake, begging her to use them with her two daughters as the pleasure of attending the play with the two young ladies had been denied him by their stern father. He dared say, he added, that Dr. Sheldrake was quite right in allowing no one to escort his young daughters excepting himself and his wife.

Having sent the tickets and the note, he was filled with self-questionings and doubt. He was not certain whether he had showed rare finesse in interpreting Dr. Sheldrake's refusal in a way which he knew was false but which saved the Doctor's pride, or whether he had been disgustingly maladroit in sending the tickets after his invitation had been declined. He was so troubled about this that he heard barely a word of the first act of the play which he and Yomanato were seeing. But Yomanato's stoical calm, which always acted upon Guido's excitable nerves like a soothing syrup, helped him to pull himself together during the intermission, and he thoroughly enjoyed the balance of the three-act comedy drama.

He received a letter by Monday morning's post from Mrs. Sheldrake, thanking him for the tickets, and saying that she was sure that she and the children would enjoy Peter Pan enormously. She added, with a sort of sly courtesy, that Dr. Sheldrake was not the martinet Guido had taken him for and would have been perfectly willing to allow the two girls to go to the matinee with Guido if Mazie, by her ill-advised though childish remark, had not seemed to hint for the very invitation which had been so promptly forthcoming. It was a fault, she continued, which they had had some difficulty in curbing in their youngest daughter; but they would, of course, not be so

unkind as to curb it at Guido's expense—that is, by depriving Mazie of the pleasure which he desired to give her.

Guido read the letter thrice. It seemed to him the acme of breeding. He was extravagantly delighted with it, and derived the greatest satisfaction from the reflection that he gained a new coterie of desirable friends through his excursion into socialistic fields. His ardent temperament and his age combined to make him see in every new personality that came into his life the possibility of unlimited adventure—adventure, be it understood, in a spiritual sense only. Moreover, he loved the society of women. The atmosphere created by refined women possessed for him the charm of poesy or of music, and merely to sit in the same room with Janet for an hour or two in the happy days of yore, when Janet's society had been one of the sweet commonplaces of life, had been an extraordinary tonic for war-jangled and study-scarred nerves. He had met no family, excepting Janet's family, which appealed to him so strikingly in a dozen different ways as did the Sheldrakes. He hoped that Dr. Sheldrake would allow him the privilege of being a frequent guest in his family circle.

So Guido walked on air for three or four days. The truthful biographer, like the faithful historian, should not substitute pretty motives for unlovely ones in elucidating the psychology of his subjects. But with every desire in the world to deal with Guido as unamiably as possible, I can find no explanation for the excessive happiness which flooded him whenever he thought that he had made new friends but that of an entirely unconscious cordiality for all mankind. It was this yearning to see all mankind happy which was at the bottom of his adventure in socialism. It was this yearning, thwarted and checked by Hauser's sarcasm, which had made him so profoundly miserable in his childhood.

His happiness upon this occasion was destined to be short-lived. Toward end of the week he received a letter from Miss Maxwell, a letter so remarkable that he studied it for upward of half an hour before definitely gathering its import to himself. There were filigree allusions and veiled insinuations of tale-bearing—allusions and insinuations which were Greek to Guido.

"Do you think," the letter concluded, in a sudden fortissimo of accusation, "that it was kind of you to come to my rooms and after discovering my Settlement activities to go directly and report upon them to Dr. Sheldrake with the purpose of sowing in his mind the seeds of mistrust concerning my motives and purposes? Under ban of my displeasure you will not attempt to learn the channel through which this information came to me. Suffice it to say that one who knows that Dr. Sheldrake's interests and mine are one and the same, since they have nothing but the furthering of the Cause at heart, warned me of what had occurred at Dr. Sheldrake's on a certain Saturday morning not long ago, warned me of the possibility of a schism for which myself, entirely blameless, would nevertheless be blamed."

The truly remarkable epistle tumbled Guido headlong down from his pinnacle of bliss. After reading the letter half a dozen times—such is the power of suggestion—he began to believe that he must have been culpable of something or other; and probably would have ended by believing himself a tale-bearer and a spy if only the accusation had been more definitely informative concerning the nature of his alleged disclosures.

He showed the letter to his mother.

Frau Ursula said, contemptuously:

"That's what you get for mingling with people of that sort."

She was of late, especially since the divorce, at times singularly harsh and abrupt in her manner of speaking. Guido pitied her profoundly, and blamed himself far too stringently for his part in her unhappiness to resent any comment which she chose to make upon himself, his friends, or his employments.

But he resented most strenuously the tone of Miss Maxwell's letter with its insulting innuendo. The letter had come by the morning's mail, and all through the morning session he was conscious of an undercurrent of oppression, a sort of mental unwellness, which seemed to numb his faculties and cloud his mind. He walked home with Yomanato and poured out his new trouble to this ever-zealous and ever-sympathetic friend.

"I can tell you frankly," Yomanato said, handing back

the letter to Guido, "that I do not share your admiration for the lady and did not from the start. The principles of the Society are all right. But I don't know about the people. Is it precluded, do you think, that Dr. Sheldrake himself placed a false construction on your visit?"

Guido was dumbfounded by the question.

"Why, yes," he said, speaking with some uncertainty, not because he mistrusted Dr. Sheldrake but because the entire situation was wrapped in such unpromising mistiness.

"My advice is, chuck the whole business," Yomanato continued. "I'm not going there again."

"Well, I am going there again," said Guido. "I like Dr. Sheldrake and his family first-rate. And I liked Miss Maxwell, too, until I received this letter. Yomanato, does it strike you as insulting?"

Yomanato regarded Guido with his usual placid immobility.

"Well," he said, "I should resent being told that I had abused a friend's hospitality. I should resent it very much."

"I do resent it, of course," said Guido, with some heat, "but the point in question is whether she meant the letter to be offensive, or whether it merely turned out to be offensive, contrary to her intentions?"

"I give it up," said Yomanato, evasively.

Guido went home and ate his lunch and returned for the afternoon session filled with a silent, blind fury. A dual current of consciousness seemed to be at work in him all afternoon, and by the close of the afternoon session, from which he had derived no benefit whatever, the letter with which he would reply to Miss Maxwell had shaped itself in his head, quite without conscious effort.

"My dear Miss Maxwell," he wrote, "I will be frank in saying that I was greatly hurt by your letter. I do not understand the accusations which you make against me. It is true that I called upon Dr. Sheldrake on Saturday, and hope to call there again, for I spent a most pleasurable hour with himself and his delightful family. I will be entirely frank with you concerning the purpose of my visit. I can tell you candidly that I was greatly troubled not so much by your and Miss Levinsky's and Mr. Lilien-cron's failure to rise when the Star Spangled Banner was

being played, as by your criticism of myself and my friends—with all it implied—for rising. I went to Dr. Sheldrake's to discover if I were violating any socialistic principle in refusing to follow your example. He assured me that I had in no way infringed upon any socialistic principle in acting as we—myself and my friends—had acted.

"As for your activities, purposes and motives, all I can say is this. Of your purposes and motives I know nothing. Your activities, self-evidently, seem so very beautiful to me that I am somewhat ashamed of myself for not having as much as mentioned them to Dr. Sheldrake, as I should have done, since the appreciation of friends is dear to all of us, even to so disinterested a character as yourself. At least so I suppose."

Having written this manly and straightforward letter as quickly as a rapidly moving pen might trace the words, Guido mailed it, and then took a two-mile walk with Yomanato, during which, by dint of considerable self-control, he did not once allude to Miss Maxwell, or Miss Maxwell's letter.

There was a meeting of the Brothers and Sisters Society on the following Monday night, and Guido persuaded Yomanato to accompany him, for he felt disinclined to appear at the Society House alone, and was not certain whether Dobronov would be there, for Dobronov was now a man of affairs, with committee and board and director meetings of his own, which must not be neglected, since upon their outcome depended the weal of many of thousand workers and their families. So Yomanato good-humoredly swallowed his aversion for Miss Maxwell, which, as a matter of fact, had been principally caused by vicarious indignation on Guido's behalf, and went with Guido to the little old-fashioned house in Greenwich Village which barely a month ago they had entered for the first time with such great expectations.

Miss Maxwell was not in evidence when they entered. Liliencron, as usual, was in the hall, acting as usher and platform page. He appeared to be in a talkative mood, and the two friends loitered in the hall to talk with him during the odd moments when he was not engaged. Presently Miss Levinsky appeared. Yomanato and she fell into a spirited conversation about Russia—was Russia, as

Kipling put it, the most western of eastern countries, or, was she, as usually regarded, the most eastern of western countries?

Liliencron and Guido were left alone.

Following a sudden impulse, Guido decided to speak to Liliencron concerning Miss Maxwell's letter, in spite of her injunction to refrain from every endeavor to discover who had informed against him. It was Guido's habit to keep his mind as clean as his body, and he brought an almost old-fashioned punctilio to bear upon an observance of this self-imposed doctrine of life. He believed that to ascribe evil intentions and base motives to others in the absence of validly convincing proofs, was a species of spiritual uncleanness. It had, in consequence, been most distasteful to him to pass in review the persons who might have informed so untrustworthily concerning himself. The brief list of mutual acquaintances had suffered complete eradication as one by one the names had been eliminated. Among these names Liliencron's had necessarily figured, and Guido now decided quite suddenly to speak to him.

"I say, Liliencron," he began, "I'd like to speak to you confidentially about something. May I?"

"Sure. Why not? Fire ahead."

"Well," Guido began, tentatively, and then launched forth. Liliencron listened to his story in apparent amarement. Once or twice Guido faltered, thinking that Liliencron had taken offense at something or other, but whenever he paused, Liliencron said, almost impatiently:

"Why don't you go on?"

"Well, what do you think?" Liliencron demanded when Guido had finished. "Who do you think went and blabbed about your visit to the Sheldrakes'?"

"I don't know," said Guido. He thought he detected a note of annoyance in the other's voice. "I don't know. I'm just dumping myself on you because the thing has worried me considerably. It's not pleasant to feel that a perfectly harmless visit should be misconstrued, and should be reported, like one of those student meetings in Russia of which you and Miss Levinsky were speaking the other day. Assuredly I did not spy on Miss Maxwell, but assuredly, also, someone did spy on me."

Liliencron laughed. He laughed in a funny, interrupted, broken-up sort of a way. Then he said:

"Look here, von Estritz, don't pay any more attention to that letter. No one spied on you. I'll explain you the mystery. Sheldrake and Hypatia belong the same literary club. It meets every Tuesday. Undoubtedly the Doctor himself told her that you had called on him the preceding Saturday, just as he told her that I had called on the evening of the same day. But he omitted to tell her why we called and that made her uneasy and curious. And to appease her curiosity she wrote you that letter, and wrote me a letter, which, if you have a taste for the parallel column, is at your disposal."

"You don't mean it!" Guido exclaimed.

"I sure do," Liliencron said, laughing. "Oh, Hypatia is all right. She's a genius, and no mistake. But geniuses are erratic. That's the whole darned business in a nutshell. Much Ado About Nothing, my lad. By answering her as you did, you walked beautifully into her trap. 'Springs to catch wood-cocks!'"

"Well, I never!" Guido exclaimed. He was red with indignation.

"Don't get excited about it," Liliencron laughed.

"But I thought you and she were old friends," Guido blurted out. He was amazed that Miss Maxwell should have meted with the same measure to an old acquaintance and to a new.

"We are. I admire her immensely. But as I said just now, you've got to make allowances for the eccentric orbits in which the human comets who are geniuses travel. And as for women—well, for the woman who is a genius or for the genius who is a woman you have to allow a double ration of sympathetic indulgence."

"Well, I'll be jiggered," said Guido.

Suddenly his indignation flared up again.

"But writing us not to attempt to trace the identity of the informer—that's, well that's Star Chamber Methods."

"Oh, forget it, my boy," said Liliencron, his words showing greater impatience than his manner. "I tell you she means well. She really does. But she is frightfully jealous of Dr. Sheldrake. Just jolly her along. Watch me

—and you'll get on famously with her and we'll all have corking good times together."

Guido left Liliencron and found Yomanato, who, in the meantime, had been deserted by Miss Levinsky. Rapidly, in a few phrases, he sketched the substance of Liliencron's revelation for Yomanato's benefit, concluding with "Star Chamber Methods, I call it, and so I told Liliencron."

"Of course it's Star Chamber Methods," Yomanato assented. "Here comes the lady. She's bearing down upon you smiling."

Guido who, in phraseology inelegant but trenchantly expressive, had been ready "to chew the bloomin' head off her" a moment ago, rose automatically as the Juno-like figure approached him, and took the hand outstretched with a royally gracious gesture quite meekly. Automatically, also, a smile came to his lips, a smile which changed almost immediately from the mechanical doll variety to a very human, keenly alive and masculinely delighted smile, as he fell well within the radius of influence exerted by the superbly beautiful woman who had written him such an offensively perplexing letter.

"I can only stop a minute," she said. "Dr. Sheldrake has asked me to go over some literature for propaganda purposes for him. But I did so want to whisper to you that I'm not the least bit angry with you any more—not the least, little bit."

"Oh!" said Guido, asininely, as he realized, and cursed himself for looking and feeling so idiotically pleased. The lady swept away before he could frame a rejoinder or pull that Gobbolike grin from his face. He had meant to be anything but pliable and yielding in his manner toward Miss Maxwell, and he had been in her hand as wax, or worse. Yes, worse. He had been as putty. How he hated and despised himself.

But youth has recuperative powers beyond the credence of age, and when it came to bidding Miss Maxwell good-night, Guido contrived to wear an air which it pleased him to think haughty and forbidding. If it was the lady was blissfully unconscious of the fact. She smiled her sweetest at Guido, and looked her friendliest as she told him "to be sure and come up some evening, very soon," with

a pronunciation of the two last words which invested them with a noble simplicity, a sort of Roman matron directness and kindness against which Guido felt it would have been churlish to shut his heart.

Nevertheless, his determination to see no more of Miss Maxwell for the present than he could possibly help remained unshaken. He hung around after close of the meeting with faithful Yomanato at his heels, hoping for a word with Dr. Sheldrake. But the little man was the excited center of an excited group, and had combed his corona of pale hair so industriously that, what with the excitement and his flushed face and dilated eyes, he looked more like a *Struwwelpeter* than ever.

But in spite of the undignified metaphor which suggested itself to Guido's literature-drenched mind, Dr. Sheldrake had inspired the young man with a liking which, if fostered, would only too rapidly have developed into a very fair sort of hero-worship. Even Professor Geddes had never moved and stirred Guido as this drab, faded, hard-working little clergyman stirred and moved him. Perhaps the impetus toward that slightly displaced vision which is an indispensable ingredient for him who would practice hero-worship must proceed from the hero-to-be-worshiped himself. Professor Geddes, on whom the wholesome imps of whimsicality and humor were always in attendance, had no talent in that direction.

At any rate, the incident of Miss Maxwell's extraordinary epistle was closed. Guido would probably have expended a lot more driveling thought upon it if, before another twenty-four hours had elapsed, the entirely conscious current of self had not been diverted into an unselfish channel.

CHAPTER XV

ON coming home in the afternoon the next day, Guido was surprised to see his mother sitting at the parlor window, very evidently waiting for him appear. It was so unusual for her to return from the Red Cross Rooms before six o'clock, that Guido hurriedly excused himself to Yomanato, and ran up the stoop three steps at a time.

Frau Ursula was at the door waiting for him. Her face was an index of the intense emotion which was invading her.

"What's happened?" Guido demanded.

She motioned him to come into the room.

"Hauser's failed," she said, tragically.

"Hauser's failed!" Guido echoed in amazement. "Hauser's failed?" he repeated, in a dazed tone. "Why, it's impossible. He was doing so well——"

His mother thrust an early extra of the local evening paper at him.

"Read," she commanded.

Guido ran hastily through the long account, which opened by praising Hauser's enterprise in the florid language of the local newspaper reporter who has got hold at last of a "big thing." Hauser, so the account ran, was a colossus. His one fault was that he was cast in too big a mold for a town like Anasquoit. He belonged among the merchant princes whose establishments were housed in marble palaces on Fifth Avenue; Anasquoit had neither the means nor the mental marrow to support so surpassing an enterprise, an enterprise which abundantly showed that its projector—to paraphrase a line from a popular poet—"dreamed in velvets and in silk conceived."

Then, descending from the altitudes of impassioned language to the prose of every day, the chronicle reported that the financial troubles in which Hauser now found himself involved had had their inception in the inception of the "Leviathan." The cost of the building alone had

been gigantic. Another fortune had gone to the purchasing of the marvelous stock of furniture, carpets, marbles, paintings, furs, garments, cut glass, silks, china, laces, silver-ware, which vied favorably with the stock of the richest and most select stores of New York. Hauser, the account declared, had run heavily into debt at the very outset. He might possibly have recouped the almost unavoidable losses of the first year, and paid his debts, and got the store upon a paying basis, if the war had not come along—the war and the divorce from one of Anasquoit's most beautiful, most charitable and richest women.

Guido, on reaching this passage, blundered over it aloud. His mother burst into a gale of tears.

"Isn't it horrible?" she cried. "Isn't it base? To drag me in! Just you read the rest."

As she indicated, worse followed bad. The account hinted broadly that if Hauser's divorced wife had not insisted upon repayment of the huge sums of money originally invested in Hauser's business enterprises, his failure might not be as irretrievable as it now appeared to be.

"Outrageous!" Guido exclaimed.

"In the first place, it wasn't a huge sum," said Frau Ursula. "It was a petty paltry little sum compared to the sums which he has been handling. And he paid it before we ever thought of a divorce. Oh, infamous!"

Guido sat staring at the paper, stupidly.

"I don't believe Hauser ever made any such statement. I'm sure he didn't," she continued, indignantly.

"Of course not," said Guido, shortly. "The 'Record' ought to be sued for libel. Mother, what are you going to do about it?"

Frau Ursula's tears ceased.

"I don't know, Guido," she said. "I want you to advise me, to help me."

"You've got to go right to him, Mother."

"Never," cried Frau Ursula. "Never. If he had come to me for help, I would have given it gladly, willingly. I would give it now gladly and willingly. But I will not go to him. I cannot go to him."

Guido began to argue with her. A man of honor would hardly apply for financial assistance to his divorced wife. If, however, that divorced wife were to go to him and

offer him the use of her money, she would be doing a very fine and altruistic thing.

"And, Mother," he concluded, "no matter what you say or think I am convinced that Hauser still loves you."

Frau Ursula became angry. She forbade Guido to reopen that phase of the matter. And she repeated vigorously that under no circumstances would she go to Hauser, or write Hauser, or send Hauser a message. She thought too much of herself to fling herself at any man, especially a man who had divorced her. No, sir!

"Then," said Guido, "I do not see that anything is to be done."

Frau Ursula sniffled. She said nothing. Guido became aware that his mother hoped he would offer to go to Hauser.

Certainly it was not a welcome task. He remembered the repulse which he had suffered upon that earlier occasion when he had approached Hauser, of which Frau Ursula knew nothing.

Frau Ursula had taken the paper from Guido's hand and was rereading the obnoxious passages, weeping as she read. And while she read Guido turned the matter over in his mind. The motive underlying Hauser's request for a divorce had been a matter of considerable conjecture to both his wife and to Guido. Guido and Frau Ursula had discussed it once only. On that occasion Frau Ursula had said explosively that presumably Hauser had fallen in love with a younger and prettier face. But Guido did not believe that his mother actually thought this. He himself believed that Hauser's motive in asking for a divorce was something far more complex than "another woman." His conviction that his mother still loved Hauser held as tenaciously as his belief that Hauser still loved Frau Ursula. There were times when Guido accused himself of being a mere mush-minded sentimentalist for adhering to this view, but adhere to it he did.

Suddenly one of the many things Hauser had said to him the evening on which he had approached Hauser without his mother's knowledge flashed back upon him. "In time you and the rest of the world will know why I have decided upon this step." That sounded like a prophecy of remarriage upon liberation, and had almost undermined Guido's faith in Hauser's constancy. Almost, but not quite.

And there had been no re-marriage, and now Guido perceived that Hauser had foreseen the failure and had known for years that it must come. And because he still loved Frau Ursula, Hauser had insisted upon a divorce and had returned her her money. He had wished to absolve her completely from any sense of obligation or responsibility in regard to his failure, and therefore he had deliberately widened the breach between himself and his wife by demanding a divorce.

It was quite ridiculously simple.

"*Mutterchen*."

"Well?"

"*Mutterchen*," and he told her what was in his mind.

Frau Ursula was at first inclined to pooh-pooh Guido's motivation for the divorce. He was, of course, unable to tell her all that was in his mind because, not for worlds, would he have let her know of that memorable interview between Hauser and himself. Still, the chain of events and circumstances which were now public property were abundantly convincing, and convince Frau Ursula they did in the end.

"And now," said Guido, "now that you at last realize what I have felt all the time must be true—that the unfortunate man loves you as much as he ever did—will you not humble your pride, and take your courage in your hands, and go to him?"

Frau Ursula's face was pitiful to look at. Her lips trembled. Her cheeks were white, in her eyes was mirrored the conflict that was taking place in her heart.

"*Ach*, Guido," she cried, "why did you make all this so painfully plain to me? It was bad enough to think that he did not love me. But to feel that he does, that he is in trouble, that I could help him if he would let me—*ach*, Guido, how miserable you have made me."

"Mother, will you not write him, or send for him, or telephone him?"

"I cannot." And after a pause, Frau Ursula added, speaking in a very small voice, indeed:

"You cannot understand. You have never been a woman."

This was so much in the nature of an anti-climax that Guido passed his hand over his mouth to hide the smile

that would come. No, he had never been a woman. But he felt, as he had often felt before, that out of Frau Ursula's obstinate and vainglorious apotheosis of sex-pride, had grown the entire string of unfortunate misunderstandings, quarrels, recriminations, unjust allegations and furious denials which had made up the mutual life of Hauser and his mother.

What possibilities of happiness had been wasted! What arid stretches of interminable years had accrued instead, as complex interest, upon the unjust thoughts which Hauser had harbored against his wife, and upon the petty vanity which had restrained her from acquainting him with her entire story and not merely with such patches of it as seemed compatible with her pride.

Guido's heart sickened within him. Nor did he forget his own part in the wretched affair. But he felt, justly, without any selfish desire to exonerate himself, that he, at least, had made an effort to disentangle matters.

He cast about now for ways and means of bettering the situation, of saving what could be saved out of the wreckage of these two lives.

"Mother, would you like me to go to Hauser and offer to help him with my own money? I will go, of course, if you like. But I cannot help feeling that it is really up to you to go."

"Oh, Guido, will you go? Will you do that for me?" Frau Ursula demanded, joyfully, totally ignoring his suggestion that she go herself. "You go, Guido," she urged in the querulous voice which a child, frightened of the dark, might have used in urging a more adventuresome companion to explore a twilight-inhabited region. "You go, Guido."

"Very well," said Guido. "I'll go. I'll go to-night."

At seven o'clock Guido presented himself at the Hauser mansion, that huge pile of granite which now filled the boy with dismay as he looked upon it. Hauser, he was told by the maid, was not expected home until midnight. So Guido went to the store, where he was told by the brawny gate-keeper that he had strict orders to admit no one.

"All them's as got wurrk to do is insoid," he said, "and

thair ain't no toim for inniwoon to boother with fancy gintlemin."

"Look here," said Guido, "I'm Mr. Hauser's stepson. You've just got to let me pass, you know."

"Joost gotter noothing," said the man, pleasantly. "Bestirr yersilf, young gintleman. Oi've got me orders, and it's from the boss Oi take thim and from no wan ilse."

"Yes, of course—but I'm his stepson. Couldn't you—now just couldn't you announce me?"

"Now I joost couldn't. For whoi? Becass the boss sez ter me ter-day, Moike, he sez, sez he, no wan is ter coom inter this store ter-day, excipting thim as has a pass with me persannil signashure. No wan, he repays in a way he has oof saying things, God bless him, when he mayns 'em good and hard. And he repayted once moor, young gintleman, no matter what the bodies'll be afther telling yer Moikeel, in their effoorts to git in, yer don't let 'em pass."

"Will you at least tell me," Guido said, "where Mr. Hauser is now?"

"Um," said Michael. "Oi'll think about it."

"Is he in now?"

"He is, young gintleman, he is."

"I'll go and telephone him," said Guido. "Then he'll send you word to let me in, and perhaps he'll fire you for not letting me in before."

"God rest yer soul," said Michael, grinning with the utmost good-nature. "Ain't the failure fired us all together? Bless your baby harrt, young gintleman, if it were merely a matter of being foired, Oi'd a let ye in long ago. But it's moore than thit. Them as is foired because of the master's misfortoon, 'ev goot boot the wan way to show they're faithful—and that's to obey oorders as is given by the boss as if thair loif depended on it. Now, d'ye oonderstand, young gintleman?"

"God bless you for that, Michael," said Guido, heartily. "Here's a fiver. No, I'm not bribing you. I'm going over to the nearest drug store to telephone."

Off Guido went, located a telephone and in a few minutes was connected with Hauser's private wire. Hauser's secretary responded.

"I'll see whether he's in," the voice curtly replied. There

followed a silence so intense that Guido guessed a hand had been placed across the mouthpiece. A moment later the cool crisp voice of the secretary said, in the most casual of tones:

"Mr. Hauser is not in."

Guido's patience snapped.

"Mr. Hauser is in," he retorted. "And I'm his stepson and I must see him. I must. Ask him whether he can spare me five minutes now. If not now, when?"

"One moment," said the exasperatingly cool voice of the secretary. Followed another dismal silence. Then: "Mr. Hauser came into the room just now. He begs to be excused. He is too busy to see anyone or to make any engagements."

Before Guido could reply the connection was discontinued. Guido, furious, trotted back to the store, and postured himself alongside of the old Irishman.

"What loock?" Michael demanded.

The broad brogue, so replete with good-humor, drove the black fury away from Guido's heart.

"Well, he won't see me, Michael. So I've just got to hang around here until he comes down."

There fell a long silence, which Michael enriched with huge volumes of tobacco smoke.

"And what may it be thet you're wanting to see the boss about so bad?" Michael demanded, suddenly. "Ye needn't answer, ye noo, if yer doon't want ter."

"Well, I want to, but I can't, because, Mike, the truth is I'm relying on the inspiration of the moment for what I've got to say to my stepdad. See?"

Michael nodded gravely. There fell another long pause. Then Michael said:

"Sayms ter me it's no harm ye'd be wurrking the boss."

"That's certain," said Guido.

"Well, young gintleman, Oi'll tell yer wot! Oi've got ter git meself some more terbeccy, and whoil Oi'm gone if ye've a moind to shoot back the bolt and walk in thair they ain't no wan to stoop ye."

"Thank you, Michael," Guido said, gravely. "If ever you need a friend, just you hunt me up, and I'll take it as a neighborly sort of thing. We've all got to help each other in this old world of ours, you know."

"Begorra, but that's true," said the old Irishman, and hobbled away.

Guido slipped quickly to the door, drew back the bolt, and swinging back the huge door, entered. The elevator man eyed him suspiciously.

"No strangers allowed on the premises," he said, shortly.

"Say, what's the matter with you?" Guido demanded, coolly. "I b'long. Get a move on. The boss is waiting for my report."

"Oh, all right," grunted the man.

The elevator shot through the dark shaft, sped airily past four floors and stopped at the fifth. Guido stepped out and walked swiftly in the direction of the only lighted door on the floor.

But having reached the door of Hauser's private office, Guido's courage suddenly failed him. He heard Hauser's voice inside, dictating, and he withdrew his hand quickly from the door-knob. He could not face Hauser in the presence of an employee who, acting upon Hauser's express instructions, had summarily told him that Hauser would not see him.

He waited uncertainly at the door. Suddenly, without warning, the door was flung open, and Hauser walked out. He wore his hat and coat and was apparently going out for something to eat.

He saw Guido before Guido could speak.

"You!" he exclaimed, as if taken aback.

"I do hope you will pardon me for forcing my way in," Guido began, uncertainly. The light from the open door fell upon Hauser's face and Guido was struck by the change in the man. The furrows on Hauser's heavy face showed like crevasses. The skin under the eyes was baggy, his cheeks were flabby, his eyes had a sodden, tortured, inflamed look as if the fever of unnumbered sleepless nights burned in them.

"Father," Guido began, jerking out the word with an effort. Hauser started lightly. "If you will only hear me," Guido continued, compassion giving a sudden impetus to his tongue. "I was clumsy before. The other time. When I came to your home. I have so much to say to you. Will you not tell me when and where I can have a few minutes with you?"

Hauser's face twitched.

"I cannot and I will not speak to you," he said, in a tired, strained voice. "I am worn out, body and soul. It is not fair to myself to take upon myself any additional physical strain. You will oblige me by not trying to stalk me in future."

"Yes, of course—" Guido replied, fatuously. "Only—is there no way in which we could be of use—my mother, myself?"

"Do I understand that you are offering me financial assistance?" Hauser asked in a voice which Guido, even in that moment of supreme mental discomfort, found time to liken to the purling waters of a brook flowing over a bed of rock biting sharp as a razor.

"My mother, myself, we are desirous of serving you in any way possible," Guido replied. "That, of course, means financially, also."

Hauser did not speak. He glared luridly at Guido. Stepping forward he brought his face into immediate proximity to the boy's. For one moment Guido thought that Hauser was going to resort in some way to physical force. He did not draw back, but looked Hauser quietly in the eye. The melodramatic moment passed. Hauser said, in a tone of concentrated fury:

"Put yourself in my place. Would I—would any man of honor accept financial help from the wife that deserted him, from the boy for whose sake she deserted him? Are you really insensible of the puppy insolence you are showing in coming here to me with such a proposition? Take yourself away, sir, and never dare to show yourself again either here or in my house."

Guido breathed with a rasping intake of breath. The blow which he had half-anticipated a little earlier could not have humiliated him and angered him more intensely than Hauser's verbal rebuff. His face burned with mortification. For a moment his power of movement as well as his power of speech seemed paralyzed. The entire effort of life seemed to bend itself merely toward adequate respiration.

When he had recovered himself sufficiently to move, he walked rapidly away, without speaking again. He did not wait for the elevator to take him down, but stumbled blindly

down the semi-dark stairs—four long flights of them—and then out into the open, past the old doorman who interrogated him in vain concerning the success of his errand.

For the moment Michael did not exist for him, nor Frau Ursula, nor Janet, nor Dr. Sheldrake, nor Elschen, nor Miss Maxwell. The confines of life had been narrowed down to two persons, Hauser and himself. All the old hatred, the impotent anger, the vindictive rancor of his childhood was blazing away in his soul anew. He smarted, he ached, he writhed under the stinging rebuff which Hauser had administered. His arm twitched with a desire to strike, to strike brutally, elementally, as men had struck in the days when the only law was the law of claw and fang.

He reached home long after ten o'clock after an aimless Odyssey through the streets.

"Well?" Frau Ursula demanded.

Guido moistened his lips. His mouth was parched with the anger which had burned in him feverishly for hours. Frau Ursula poured him a glass of water. He drained it to the last drop. Then he said:

"He treated me the way—well the way we might have expected he would treat me."

He drew off his hat and coat and flung them upon the dining-room table. His hat rolled off at the far end. Frau Ursula stooped and picked it up and laid it on the sewing machine. She began to question Guido. Had he been with Hauser all this time? What had he said to Hauser? What had Hauser said to him? Where had he seen Hauser? How did Hauser look? Ill? Fagged? Aged? Greatly worried?

Guido took a savage delight in forcing his mother to drag the story of his humiliating defeat from him piecemeal. His humiliation, since he had been her emissary, was hers. Also it served her good and right for not going herself. In spite of Hauser's unwarrantable brutality, Guido still felt an invincible belief in Hauser's affection for his mother, and he did not believe that Hauser would have treated her with anything but courtesy. Indeed, blinded as he was by fury at having subjected himself to Hauser's rebuff, the psychologist in him believed that Hauser's wrath had been tremendously fanned by his disappointment that Frau Ursula, instead of coming herself,

or writing herself, had sent her son, the direct cause of the wretched matrimonial venture as well as of the signal disaster in which it had ended.

But Frau Ursula turned so white, and sat so still after Guido, under hydraulic pressure, had yielded his last drop of distilled wormwood, that the boy's heart smote him. He went to his mother's side, and threw himself upon his knees, and kissed her fervently, passionately.

"Mother, he's a brute; try to forget all about him. Surely, after this—even if he does still love you. It's hopeless."

"Yes, it's hopeless," Frau Ursula assented. Her lips quivered. She drew Guido closer, and resting her head upon his, began to sob, great, heart-broken sobs that shook the boy's body along with her own. And each sob stabbed the boy's tender heart like a knife. He loved her so dearly, so passionately, and he was unable to help her. And, when the last was said, it was his fault that the rupture had occurred. He ground his teeth in impotent remorse.

In spite of Frau Ursula's avowed intention to put Hauser completely out of her mind, Guido, watching her closely in the days that followed, could see that she was thinking of very little else. She was a woman whose mental and physical alertness made inactivity for any length of time intolerable, and when at home she was never unoccupied. Evenings she either read or embroidered or mended. Frequently, now, Guido saw her needlework drop unheeded into her lap, or the page of a book which she was ostensibly reading remain unturned for half an hour, while her eyes held the abstracted and veiled look of fathom-deep revery. She was more worried about Hauser's future than about her own unhappiness, as Guido knew from remarks which she dropped at times. Then Guido would curse Hauser softly under his breath, and cast about for some pleasant topic with which to entice Frau Ursula away from her preoccupation.

Compared with the catastrophic nature of the Hauser failure, the Miss Maxwell incident, which had loomed so big and important, sank into insignificance. Therefore, when about ten days later Guido received a note from Miss Maxwell asking him to come and meet one or two of her friends the following Friday evening, and bring his friends

with him, Guido felt no hesitation in accepting for himself. Both Dobronov and Yomanato declined to accompany him. The lady had not stirred them to enthusiasm.

Besides Miss Maxwell, there were assembled in Miss Maxwell's rooms when Guido arrived, Liliencron and Miss Levinsky, a very handsome young Italian, who did not say a word all evening, a German-Swiss, who, if Liliencron might be likened to Miss Maxwell's Chorus, acted as a sort of Semi-Chorus, and a lady whose nationality Guido could not make out, and whose name, as nearly as Guido could catch it, seemed to be Armeau. This lady wore a tight-fitting black basque with tight-fitting sleeves, which terminated above the elbow, displaying very soft-looking, well-rounded white arms. In contrast with the softness of her arms and the dainty, delicate baby-blue of her eyes, was the discordant voice which, when its owner became excited, shrilled higher and higher. As Miss Armeau's normal frame of mind seemed to be excitement, her voice registered at its most unmelodious pitch most of the time. She spoke very slowly and deliberately, punctuating her sentences with a plethora of pauses, while her eyes were fixed with a sort of ruthless determination now upon this face and now upon that. This slowness in delivery made her sentences seem interminable, and Miss Maxwell, whenever the strain of listening to her friend's monologues became insufferable, calmly broke into them with some relevant remark, and then tranquilly appropriated the conversation and the attention of her guests to herself.

The discourse of these two, in consequence, was something in the nature of a continual skirmish, each woman apparently listening only to the other in order to discover the weak link in her opponent's conversational chain through which she might successfully break.

Said Miss Armeau:

"It is true," pause, "no doubt," pause, "that capital has made this war," pause, "as it has made every other war," pause, "since the world began. If people," pause, "could only be made to see," pause, "how they are being fooled," pause, "yes, fooled," pause, "the ranks of socialists," pause, "all over the world," "pause, "would be swelled——"

It was by no means apparent whether Miss Armeau had finished what she wanted to say. Although her sentences

were interlarded with pauses, she had taken the precaution to dispense with the customary pause at the conclusion of every sentence, because a terminating pause might have afforded an opening wedge into her phalanx of words. Miss Maxwell therefore felt justified in throwing courtesy to the winds, and leaped boldly into the breach presented.

"That is very true," she said in her deep, musical voice which fell like a balm upon the tortured aural nerves of the others, "and it is our business, dear Miss Armean, to see to it that the eyes of the disinherited and the exploited are opened. And then socialism will have its innings—bigger innings than even we, who are socialism's pioneers, can foresee."

Miss Maxwell had spoken without haste and without nervousness, with the cool aplomb and security of the born speaker. Liliencron said, endorsingly:

"Yes, we must do all we can to open the eyes of the disinherited."

"That," boomed the deep voice of the Swiss, "is our sacred duty and our privilege."

"The trouble is," said Miss Armean, "that there are none so blind as those who will not see." Her pauses were somewhat briefer now than in her former discourse. Apparently she did not feel as certain as before of retaining the ball of conversation. "Take the matter of the present War. Well-meaning people all over insist on ascribing it to idealistic causes instead of the true causes. European capital made the war, American capital is making possible its continuance, and Wall Street, in order to get back its investments, will ultimately plunge our country into it. If ever there was a purely commercial war, it is this war. Alas!" she cried theatrically, "for the gift of a myriad of silver tongues to make people see the truth."

"But that is precisely what the pro-Germans claim," Guido protested, "that this is a commercial war."

Miss Armean glared at Guido hostilely.

"I know nothing of pro-Germans, nor do I know anything of their contentions," she said, scathingly.

"Anyone acquainted with the socialistic primer knows that what Miss Armean said just now is true," Miss Maxwell said to Guido. "All wars are commercial—that is economic—wars. You will have to relearn history. Every

war has an economic foundation. There never was a war yet which was fought on idealistic grounds."

"True, only too true," Liliencron assented, sadly.

"Absolutely true," boomed the Swiss.

"I have given much thought to this matter," shrilled Miss Armeau, with an unwonted velocity. She was, apparently, determined to have her say. "If we could only strike at the heart of the evil—if we could only rewrite the school histories—then, in another generation the millennium would be at hand."

Guido was entirely nonplused. He looked questioningly at Miss Maxwell, but dared not say anything for fear of again bringing down upon himself a rebuke from the soft-armed, shrill-voiced lady.

Miss Maxwell caught his look of appeal.

"Everybody," she said, "newspaper publishers, publishers of text-books, publishers of magazines—all are in league to perpetuate the capitalistic form of government. Take our trouble with Mexico, which is sufficiently recent to still be in everybody's mind. What business had President Wilson to have our marines land on Mexican territory?"

"But the Mexicans had been murdering Americans," said Guido, "and every sovereign nation protects the lives of its citizens, doesn't it?"

"Lives!" said Miss Maxwell, with infinite scorn.

"Lives!" shrilled Miss Armeau.

"Lives!" Liliencron and Miss Levinsky commented, laughing derisively.

"Lives!" boomed the big Swiss.

Even the silent Italian moved his lips as if desirous of adding his quota to the storm of indignation which had burst upon Guido.

"My dear boy," Miss Maxwell remarked, compassionately, "no sovereign state cares one jot or tittle about the *lives* of its citizens, unless they be *rich* citizens, and then it is not really the lives that matter, but the property. All government at the present time, the world over, is conducted by the rich. If the *lives* of citizens are valued at all, it is only for the sake of the man-power which every state expects to develop in times of war. It is then that the life of even the poor citizens acquires a certain value.

For all government, I repeat, is for the rich, of the rich and by the rich."

"Surely not in America," Guido exclaimed, impetuously.

"You must try to stop believing things just because they have been taught you," Miss Maxwell said, patronizingly. "Our entire Constitution, and the Declaration of Independence as well is as dishonest as that one phrase, 'of the people, for the people and by the people.'"

"Dishonest!" Guido exclaimed. He was staggered.

"Yes, of course," Miss Armeau said, violently. Miss Maxwell silenced her with an imperious look, and continued:

"Of course both of these instruments are dishonest. The Declaration expressly announces that 'all men are created equal.' Nevertheless it connived at the perpetuation of slavery."

"It was unwilling to do so, it did so with reluctance only," Guido cried, passionately. "The word 'slave' is nowhere used. You know that Washington and many another of the country's great progenitors provided in their wills for the liberation of their slaves."

"Yes," said Miss Armeau, "but they did not attack the institution of slavery."

"How could they?" Guido demanded. "The thirteen states were so very feeble. The issue of slavery nearly rent the country asunder eighty years later. If it had been urged beyond the compromise line in 1783, the thirteen states would never have been able to form a union, and would, in time, have reverted to the Crown."

"It is not a question of expediency at all," said Miss Armeau. "It is a question of honesty. The Constitution and the Declaration are dishonest because they permitted slavery to continue after declaring war on Great Britain because 'all men are created equal.' And their reason for conniving at slavery was that the North was fattening on the slave trade and the South was fattening on slave labor."

"Both instruments are dishonest on another count," said Miss Maxwell. "After all the idealistic indignation of the Thirteen Colonies concerning the 'principle' of 'no taxation without representation,' the new state disfranchised a large proportion of its white freemen upon property dis-

qualifications. In the north the property qualification to vote consisted of acreage, in the south, usually, of heads of slaves. Yet these disfranchised whites were taxed along with the rest of the population. Do you consider that that was honest?"

Guido reddened angrily.

"This is sophistry," he thought, "quite as much so as all the pro-German argumentation is sophistry." He said, after a moment:

"I do not think we can judge fairly of the men—and the documents—of any age without taking into account the educational advantages, environment and the general condition of civilization of the era in which they lived. Now the men of the revolutionary era were very great men, but even great men are men and not gods, and great as these men were they could not get away entirely from the conditions of their own age, nor from the prejudices and convictions of their own age. And I do believe, with all my heart, and contend that it was better that they should have retained—as they did—many imperfections in the social fabric of their time, and bring about the Union and the consequent independence of the thirteen original states than that, through too rigid adherence to purely idealistic motives, they should have undone and forfeited what had been accomplished by the War for Independence."

"Well, there was no fear that any of the very great men of that era, or of any other era, should have had principles that were too idealistic," Miss Maxwell rejoined. "The trouble with you is that you have not yet outgrown patriotism—you still consider patriotism the supreme civic virtue, and that being so you consider the history of your own country as a sort of sacrosanct chronicle, and the popular idols of the uninformed masses a species of demi-gods."

"And whom do you call 'popular idols?' " Guido inquired.

"Washington, Lincoln and all the rest," Miss Maxwell rejoined calmly. "I do not deny—no socialist denies—that they were good men and great. They were excellent men. I agree so far with you as to concede that they, like the other men who made our country, could not escape entirely from the mental and moral atmosphere engendered by their own age. But, having conceded this, I go one

step further than you do. Because they were products of their own age, they were subject to the same influences, vicious and otherwise, as the other men and women of their age. Washington was a land surveyor for the Crown, as you know. You may not know that he contributed largely toward the financing of a land-lobby in London to push his land schemes, after having used his position as a royal surveyor to locate acres of fertile land which he hoped would bring him a fortune. If the Revolution had not occurred, or, occurring, had not been successful, he would have lost heavily. Now I do not go so far as to say that this consideration constituted Washington's sole motive in playing the active part he did in the Revolution, but, knowing human nature, I cannot honestly believe that this circumstance did not weigh heavily with him in deciding to throw himself as heartily as he did into the revolutionary cause."

Too shocked and outraged to reply, Guido stared at Miss Maxwell in amazement. A sensation of almost physical nausea swept over him. There was, as he knew from his experiences in arguing with pro-Germans, accusations so sinister that decent-minded people do not stoop to refute them, because they are too base to be admitted in the arena of honest argument. He felt something like pity for natures so stunted and dwarfed that nothing would do but they must smirch a fame so fair as Washington's.

He inquired, with a sort of mechanical curiosity:

"And Lincoln?"

"Lincoln?" Miss Maxwell paused a moment. "Lincoln, as you know, had no intention of freeing the slaves. His avowed intention was to preserve the Union."

"That is true," Guido assented, wondering in what way his admission of a well-known truth would be twisted and garbled beyond recognition.

"What more need be said?" Miss Maxwell demanded serenely. "The Union was rich and prosperous. If the states comprised in the Confederacy had been wrenched from it, the Union would have been impoverished in more ways than one. Lincoln was the outcome of his own day—he stood for the North, and the North stood for Capital, and Capital recognized that slave-labor must go if white free labor was to be subjected to further compression.

There's the entire Civil War causation for you in a nutshell."

"But you said a minute ago," Guido retorted, "that Lincoln's original intention had not been to free the slaves. Then why accuse him in a second breath of a desire to abolish slavery for the purpose of further compression of free labor? You contradict yourself, do you not?"

Miss Maxwell flushed. She was considerably annoyed.

"Not in the least," she said, coldly. "I desired to show you the absence in Lincoln of 'idealistic' motives. Of course the capitalists of the North were more far-sighted than he, and ultimately he bowed to their behests."

Guido wanted to cry out that all this was a monstrous perversion, an insidious falsification of history, but he perceived the futility of attempting straightforward argument with minds which had purposely poured themselves into a narrow trough of thought with banks so steep and high that, having once whole-heartedly plunged into that trough no escape therefrom was possible. So he refrained from saying all that he wanted to say—that Lincoln, all the while he was pursuing the harsh, strict path of duty toward the entire nation, as he conceived it—but hating and abhorring slavery with his whole heart and soul as did every humane man and woman of the North—was subconsciously augmenting that tremendous tide of onrushing democracy which, in America, is destined to become more inclusive with every age and every generation, and which, self-evidently, in Lincoln's day was bound to sweep before it all bulwarks, outposts and stakes of the huge, festering canker that had eaten its way into our national life.

Before Guido made his farewell at ten o'clock, he had heard a good many more astonishing things. Our War with Tripoli had been waged solely in the interests of property, not in the interests of honesty and humanity. The Crusades had been undertaken because the Moslems were interfering with the continuance of Eastern trade. America was discovered because a new lane to the Far East seemed essential for the well-being of the rich merchants of Columbus' time. Marshall had arrogated to himself autocratic powers which those who created the post of Chief Justice had had no intention of bestowing. Hancock and other Signers were the rankest sort of capitalists, and

they had participated in and fomented the Revolution because they hoped, in establishing an independent state, to lord it over others instead of being themselves lorded over. In brief, all the men who helped in any way to establish the new government of the United States were a lot of conspirators who played into their own hands and into the hands of their brother capitalists.

Guido was unspeakably revolted by the purely mechanistic theory of history which was the shibboleth of these people, and which was applied as a universal solvent to every phase of evolution and of life.

Guido went home in a very despondent frame of mind. Dobronov came in unexpectedly one evening for supper, and was prevailed upon to remain for the night. Guido telephoned Yomanato, and the three were closeted until long after midnight discussing the remarkable utterances which their socialistic friends had voiced.

Yomanato said:

"I am not going there again. I am disappointed in these people. I am afraid I did not understand what socialism means. I thought it meant to have faith in mankind, to live as the early Christians and the early Buddhists lived, to refrain from imputing evil motives to others. But these people, under the guise of being idealists themselves, are in reality gross materialists, and show it by slandering everyone who happens to differ from them.

"No, decidedly, I shall not go there again."

Dobronov took a different view of the matter. He was inclined to disapprove not of socialism in general, but only of the particular brand of socialism which these "parlor socialists" were vending. He was not even certain but that they were not right in interpreting history as they did. His chief quarrel with them was that they did not know poverty at first hand.

Dobronov was at the same time the worst-poised and the best-hearted creature imaginable. His lack of poise was evidenced in a thousand and one unexpected ways. His quest for a religion was only one aspect of it. Another was his attitude toward reading matter of all sorts. He would not look at books and magazines or even newspapers for weeks at a time. Then, when his interest in one subject or another had been aroused, he would spend sixteen or

eighteen hours a day devouring everything he could lay his hands on that had a bearing upon the topic which engrossed him. He had, in the brief period that had elapsed since his introduction to socialism, read an incredibly large number of socialistic books, and it became apparent to Guido from the emphasis with which Dobronov spoke, even more than from the substance of his words, that Sergius Ivanovich's interest in socialism was destined to be more than a casual or passing one.

Guido made no very strenuous effort to wean Dobronov away from the socialistic path. Spiritually he himself was hard beset. He had, in the first flush of what he thought a wonderful politico-religious discovery, embraced socialism as another man might have embraced a religion. Socialism, in fact, as we know, had seemed to him the religion of humanity and therefore the religion of Christ. The unexpected vistas of socialistic thought into which Miss Maxwell and Miss Armeau had introduced him made him profoundly unhappy. He was cast into black doubt, and he suffered as much as any Christian who has begun to doubt his theology.

It was the religious view of socialism which especially commended itself to Dobronov. The economics of socialism did not trouble him overmuch. His peculiar temperamental redundancies and deficiencies made it possible for him to slur over any doctrines which did not attract him so long as they did not actively repel. The religious aspect of socialism satisfied him. The rest did not really matter in the young Russian's estimation.

Guido did not attend the next meeting of the Brothers and Sisters. He wanted to see Dr. Sheldrake once more before deciding definitely whether to remain on the roster of the Society, or not. Guido took the matter of spiritual honesty very seriously, nor did it occur to him that there were those who did not.

He called upon Dr. Sheldrake the following Saturday morning. He rang the door-bell repeatedly, but no one answered his summons. Perceiving that the door was not tightly closed, he tried the door. It gave, and he entered the narrow dark hall and walked upstairs.

The door to the "attic" apartment stood wide open. Guido stood uncertainly in the hall, trying to locate the

floor bell, when he was startled by a series of unearthly sounds which issued from the direction of the Doctor's study. The sounds continued. They seemed like miniature explosions of some sort—explosions, perhaps of a perfectly harmless sort, caused, possibly by the dismemberment of innocuous words, which, owing to their disrupted condition assumed the proportions of the heroic and the semblance of the uncanny.

Guido decided that the time was not one for ceremony, and entering the hall, he walked rapidly in the direction of the large room which he had admired so greatly upon a former occasion.

A remarkable sight greeted his eyes.

In the middle of the room stood Dr. Sheldrake, coatless, collarless, wrapped in a heavy sweater, a very stout rope trailing behind him, his hair more than usually disheveled, his hands dripping with what at first glance appeared to be blood. From his mouth issued the vehement unintelligible sounds which had first attracted Guido's attention. Upon the floor before him was a continually thickening red pool.

"I've done it," cried Dr. Sheldrake, excitedly, "I've done it." His hand automatically sought his hair, but he thought himself in time of the red terror oozing from his fingers, and spasmodically dropped his hand to his side.

Guido's first impression was that Dr. Sheldrake, goaded into temporary insanity by the machinations of the church authorities, had attempted suicide by hanging. Second thought revealed the absurdity of this theory, as self-murder cannot be accomplished by passing a rope about one's torso. And upon the Doctor's neck there was no trace of a rope. Also, attempted hanging would not cover a man's hands with as much of the gory life-fluid as might have accrued to an executioner during the Reign of Terror in the course of an entire day's employment.

Guido scrutinized the viscid pool upon the floor more closely. It was red paint.

His relief was so great that he laughed.

"I've done it," Dr. Sheldrake cried again. "I've done it. How can you have the heart to laugh at my plight?"

"I am not laughing at your plight," Guido responded, checking his hilarity, "but my relief on finding the stuff

on your hands is only paint is so great that I simply had to laugh. Can I help you?"

"Yes. Go to the kitchen and find something to dab the worst part of this mess off me," Dr. Sheldrake replied. "And do look out for your head. If you break your pate I will surely be accused of murder."

The warning came none too soon. Guido had already rapped his head soundly against an unpadded part of the ceiling. But, without waiting to nurse his head, he found a pile of old newspapers and seizing half of the pile, ran with it back into the study. Unfolding a newspaper, he was about to throw several thicknesses of it over the Doctor's hands, when the Doctor's right hand, pursuing its accustomed groove of action, swung upward in the direction of his head. In vain Guido cried, "Have a care, sir!" The warning came too late. Dr. Sheldrake's hand had reached its goal, and had enlivened his pallid hair with streaks and patches of red which a camouflage artist could not have bettered.

"Worse and worse," groaned the Doctor. "Pray, how do I look? At least I cannot see my own hair."

Guido smothered his laughter, and fell vigorously to rubbing the Doctor's hands with newspaper, contriving, in a few seconds, to remove the most terrifying traces of the little man's apparent deed of violence.

"Turn the chair about, will you?" said the Doctor, in a feeble voice. "Turn it about, so as to face away from this shambles."

Guido, half-choking with suppressed laughter, did as the Doctor bade him do, whereupon the clergyman threw himself into the chair with a tremendous sigh of relief.

"Turpentine," he said, in the tone of a person suffering from the last stages of inanition, "turpentine, or I faint."

"Where?" Guido inquired.

"On the window-sill," breathed the Doctor, eye-lids weakly aflutter.

Guido found the turpentine, and brought it to the Doctor who poured some of it over his hands, using a newspaper as a napkin. Either the turpentine was very strong, or the paint was not very good. At any rate, with every application the evidences of the Doctor's guilt grew less conspicuous and less incriminating.

"Thank heaven!" Dr. Sheldrake heaved a soul-stirring sigh. "Is there very much on the floor back of me?"

"A miniature lake," Guido reported.

"Well, I don't care!" Dr. Sheldrake's tone was the tone of a defiant little boy who challenges the entire world to prove that he did it. "If Mrs. Sheldrake feels inclined to blame me for spilling the beastly stuff on the floor, I shall blame her for spilling it over my hands. I shall blame her for insisting on red paint when I wanted green."

"What was the paint intended for?" Guido inquired, solicitously.

"Intended for!" Dr. Sheldrake echoed, in a terrified voice. He jerked himself up in his chair, and turning around, contemplated the "shambles."

"It was a big pail," he groaned. "Two dollars and fifty-five cents wasted and the floor ruined. And all because Mrs. Sheldrake would have it red instead of green."

"But what did it's being red have to do with it?" Guido inquired.

"It had everything to do with it," Dr. Sheldrake replied, emphatically. "I never handle red paint—which I abhor—but I have an accident. And from that accident I always emerge looking like and feeling like Macbeth, or Pontius Pilate, or Catherine de Medici. Never, never again will I use red paint. Not for anything. Not for anybody."

"What had you intended decorating?" Guido inquired.

Dr. Sheldrake waved his semi-clean right hand melodramatically in the direction of the roof. Then, by way of gesticulatory flourish, the hand, before Guido could interfere, flew to his head, brushed through the hair and withdrew itself enriched with the crimson hue.

"Brrrr—" said Dr. Sheldrake. "Some more turpentine, if you please. The window-boxes, of course. And the roof. I paint them every spring. It's a little early, but the day was so warm and clear."

Guido indicated the rope.

"You anchor yourself by that, I suppose," he said. "But what do you anchor yourself to?"

"The piano," said Dr. Sheldrake, in the most matter-of-fact tone. "Mrs. Sheldrake does not play. Neither do the girls. Neither do I. It's all we keep the piano for—

so I can anchor myself to it every spring when I do the window-boxes."

Having recovered by this time from seeing the paint upon his hands, and having rubbed himself clean once more with turpentine, Dr. Sheldrake deliberately turned and surveyed the pool on the floor, which was gradually spreading out like a huge star-fish.

"I am going to wipe that up at any rate," said Guido.

"Perhaps you would not mind getting the mop," Dr. Sheldrake suggested. "Faugh—how the stuff turns my stomach."

"It will ruin the mop," said Guido.

"Oh, bother the mop," said Dr. Sheldrake.

Obediently, therefore, Guido went to fetch the mop, and began wiping up the floor with it. He was still engaged upon his sticky task when Mrs. Sheldrake and the girls entered. Then the entire story, Guido's rescue of Dr. Sheldrake included, had to be told, amid cries of dismay on Mrs. Sheldrake's part, and little fountains of rippling laughter on the part of the girls. Mrs. Sheldrake and her daughters withdrew presently, and Dr. Sheldrake and Guido were again alone.

"I will not keep you any longer," said Guido.

"You have not yet told me what you came for."

"I think I ought not to trouble you to-day," Guido began, but Dr. Sheldrake interrupted him with:

"My dear boy, you know what I told you the other day. It would be refreshing, positively exhilarating I should say, to hear that others have troubles as well as myself."

"Well, then," said Guido, and told Dr. Sheldrake about his conscientious scruples.

"I am not certain that I did right in joining your Society. I am not certain that I am a socialist at all. I'd like to ask you about some things I heard the other day—whether a socialist is supposed to believe them—because the fact is I cannot and will not and would not believe them."

"Cannot and will not and would not!" Dr. Sheldrake exclaimed. "Well, that sounds quite formidable. And what are these things that you cannot and will not and would not believe? Or, perhaps, I had better begin by asking you where you heard them?"

"I would rather not tell you that," Guido replied.

"I see—Hypatia's. My dear lad, Hypatia is an extremist as I have told you before. She really belongs with an entirely different organization than ours. What shocked you particularly?"

Guido explained his predicament as best he could. Dr. Sheldrake listened attentively. It really seemed as if he was able to thrust his own difficulties into the background at a moment's notice in order to listen to the grievances of others.

When Guido had finished, Dr. Sheldrake said:

"You have very much to learn before you will begin to understand the habitual viewpoint of the seasoned socialist. I can understand," he continued, not unkindly, "that the way in which these economic truisms were sprung upon you shocked and bewildered and outraged you. You will see in time that we are right. Not that I am saying a word against Washington or Lincoln. Wonderful men, both. As I said before, Miss Maxwell is an extremist. But you must read diligently concerning the economics of history. Once you have got certain salient facts concerning the economic interpretation of history through your head you will have grasped the underlying principles of socialism, and all these doubts and scruples will disappear."

Thus spoke Dr. Sheldrake, and now Guido was bewildered indeed. His words were neither a denial of nor an acquiescence in Miss Maxwell's words. Guido questioned him further, but could elicit nothing definite. Socialism was founded on an economic as opposed to a political and idealistic interpretation of history. America, of course, was all right, but our democracy was not thoroughgoing enough. Socialized America would be nothing but an apotheosis of American democracy.

Guido could make nothing of it. He took his leave and went away with a heavy heart. This matter of socialistic belief or unbelief was to him, he thought, a matter of spiritual life or death, and he saw no way of obtaining the enlightenment for which he yearned. He went home and locked himself in his room. Carefully he went over the ground once more, carefully weighed the pros and cons of socialism as he now conceived them to be. Now the pros outweighed the cons, and now the ratio was reversed. He was very miserable.

During the entire ensuing week he plunged and floundered about in an ocean of doubt, and his troubled state of mind was aggravated by the fact that the War was drawing nearer and nearer to America. The Germans were indulging in a daily carouse of cold-blooded murder and villainies such as the world had thought relegated to the past. The newspapers presented tales which made a five-reeler with a murder in every scene and a wholesale drowning thrown in for good measure in every other scene, look vapid and tame. Nerves were becoming calloused, the moral sensibilities blunted; one cannot read a heart-breaking narrative of pillage and plunder and rape before breakfast every morning without becoming mentally and spiritually roughened.

Guido realized, as almost every thinking American realized in February, nineteen hundred and seventeen, that the war was now not many weeks away. The last few hundred feet of film remained to be unrolled—Germany's attempt to embroil us with Mexico and Japan, Zimmerman's unbelievable rascality—but the climax had been reached and passed. The overwhelming bulk of the evidence was in. Germany was already fully convicted by the American commonwealth, and the weeks which had still to elapse before war would finally be declared, were merely so many weeks of grace.

Guido's pacifism had never been entirely war-proof. True, he had sketched a Peace Play, which he wished to offer Henry Ford, and of which the greater part had actually been written in moments of virtuous self-repression when, by barring from his horizon all thought of war-mangled Europe, he had climbed to the topmost pinnacle of exsanguined diffidence inhabited by blue ribbon pacifists.

Even while at work upon his Peace Play, he had his moments of grave doubt. To exterminate these doubts, he wrote all the harder, working himself into a perfect frenzy of pacifism, very much as a Christian Scientist tries to choke back an oncoming sickness by cozening assurances of perfect health.

His doubts had reached high-water mark when something occurred which forced him to align himself definitely.

Miss Maxwell, as Dr. Sheldrake had indicated repeatedly, was an extremist. She was a member of another organiza-

tion, which need not be mentioned here by name, and which, in a moment of inspiration, hatched the brilliant idea of consigning to the melting-pot of fire the flags of all nations, including the American flag, so that there might emerge from the flames the Red Flag of Internationalism, which, at this time it is only fair to remark, had not yet acquired the sinister significance thrust upon it by the Russian Reds. Miss Maxwell invited Guido to be present at the ceremony, thinking to do him a good turn.

Guido declined. He had no very clear notion of the law which expressly forbids all tampering with the American flag, but he had a very great love for that flag, and that love begat an aversion to seeing its subjected to destruction together with the flags of other nations, which, doubtless, were as dear to the people of those countries as Old Glory is to the American heart.

Miss Maxwell went to great pains to explain to the boy the beautiful significance of the projected ceremony. Guido assured her that he thoroughly understood her viewpoint. His alert imagination caught at the central idea easily enough. Miss Maxwell's friends wanted to symbolize that the peoples of all countries were to merge themselves into a higher conception of united humanity than the world had yet known, so that all petty national ambitions would be purged away, leaving as a residue all that was good and fine. This residue, needless to say, was the lever upon which the proletariat was to come into its own.

Miss Maxwell, having heard Guido explain her own point of view, challenged him by demanding that, since he understood the situation perfectly, he must embrace it, cleave unto it, suffer for it. Guido demurred. Because he understood her viewpoint it did not follow that that viewpoint was his.

Miss Maxwell said, with considerable heat, that she could bring herself to believe anything she wanted to. Guido replied, blood and words also in close proximity to boiling point, that his idea of belief was to carefully weigh all the evidence for and against, and then come to a definite conclusion. He did not believe, he said, that there was an overwhelming evidence in favor of any theory or practice of religious faith or political affiliation. One had to choose

the faith which, considered all in all, answered one's spiritual needs, and overlook minor divergences.

There fell a slight frostiness which was not dissipated before they parted that evening. When Guido next saw Miss Maxwell, which was at a meeting of the Brothers and Sisters Society, the flag-burning had been accomplished, accompanied by the jeers and caterwauling of the occupants of adjoining houses who, sad to relate, emphasized their displeasure by the throwing of offal. To their dismay, the flag-burners had been arrested the next morning.

Guido overheard Dr. Sheldrake say to Miss Maxwell: "You shouldn't have done it, you know."

The brief rebuke made Guido inordinately happy. With all his heart he still longed to cling to the socialistic idea as he had at first envisaged it, and which had its pivotal point in the brotherhood of man. To tear that conception out of his heart would mean to uproot convictions which were dear as life itself.

During the course of the evening Miss Maxwell desired Guido's opinion of the ceremony. Guido, in replying, merely iterated what he had said before. As an American, he felt an insuperable aversion for the arbitrary destruction of the American flag.

"It's fetich-worship, I tell you," Miss Maxwell said, angrily. "This ridiculous kow-towing and bowing down to the flag is unworthy of freemen. You do not understand the higher significance of being a patriot. It means not only to get all you can out of a country, but to help improve and ennoble it."

Guido bit his lips. The red blood rose to his cheeks, but he said, quietly enough:

"You yourself told me that everybody in the neighborhood disapproved of the ceremony. Call it fetich-worship for the sake of argument, but, as we are a democracy, we must abide by majority rule. And apparently the majority of folks who were forced to witness the spectacle did not approve of it."

Miss Maxwell's eyes darted fire. She shrugged her handsome shoulders and then said:

"If the majority is wrong it behooves an intelligent and determined minority to do as it sees fit in spite of opposition."

"But," Guido objected, "that is not the democratic ideal. That savors very much of autocracy, you know."

Guido did not wait to see the meeting out. He went home feeling wretchedly dejected. He could not have said what particular incident had finally hardened his resolution to withdraw from the Society. There were so many factors that had come into play. A complex current of feeling and thought had urged him to remain in the socialistic fold; as complex a current of sentiment and conviction urged him to leave it. The latter current triumphed for there was, as he now realized, an insuperable obstacle to his being an out-and-out socialist. What the doctrine of the Real Presence is to the Roman Catholic Church, the doctrine of the Economic Interpretation of History is to socialism. Guido could not prostitute his intellect sufficiently to accept that doctrine unconditionally. He could not bring himself to view all men and all motives, excepting only socialists and socialistic motives as material, selfish, sordid and immoral. He told himself passionately that he would sooner go to the stake that subscribe to such a pernicious and subversive doctrine. And suddenly he understood what he had once said that nothing would ever make him understand. He understood that spiritual convictions may assume proportions so gigantic because of the impressions they leave upon the life of the race, that heroic men and women of all climes and ages sooner than abate one jot or tittle of those convictions have suffered persecution, torture and death.

There was, moreover, perhaps principally and foremost, the bearing of all this upon the War. For Guido no longer disguised his feelings in the course of his self-communings—he desired the War, he longed for it, he wanted America to get into it, and the quicker the better.

He wrote Miss Maxwell that very evening.

He told her briefly that his conscience bade him leave the Brothers and Sisters Society because for one thing he felt that the time had come when all good Americans ought neither by thought nor act oppose the oncoming War between America and Germany. He felt, also, there were a good many socialistic doctrines to which he could never subscribe. So he conceived it to be his duty as an honest man to withdraw from the Society.

With the strange desire for finality which assails the poor finite human understanding after days of anguish and nights of travail, Guido desired earnestly to bring the matter to a close as far as Miss Maxwell was concerned. So he posted the letter that very night. To Dr. Sheldrake he did not write, for he intended going to see him the following Saturday.

To his surprise the next evening's mail brought him letters both from Miss Maxwell and from Dr. Sheldrake. He read the latter first.

"I am very much surprised," Guido's hero wrote, "to hear from Miss Maxwell that you are leaving our Society on the ground that we are a pacifist society. No notion could be more erroneous. As a matter of fairness I must correct this impression as well as your other mistaken belief that we are unamerican, a belief which Miss Maxwell tells me you have quite unaccountably conceived. We are in no sense a pacifist organization, and we are patriotically American."

Guido read no further. With a little cry of disgust he flung the letter away, and opened the second letter—the one from Miss Maxwell.

This letter was the most remarkable epistle which Guido had ever received. It opened with an expression of regret that he was leaving the Society, stated that she had resigned for him, invited him to come and see her on Sunday evening to meet some non-socialist friends, and wound up with the following extraordinary statements:

"We will not discuss socialism again. You must realize that you have behaved very badly. I introduced you to my friends, and now you have turned against them. In spite of your repeated asseverations of Americanism, you are hopelessly German. Your entire mental make-up is German. Your parents were German. You were born in a German town, have lived in a German environment all your life and as a consequence you cannot think but as a German."

Guido read no more. He was blind with rage. He writhed, he spluttered, he fumed. The absurdity of the thing—being denounced as possessing a German cast of mind by a woman who remained strongly pacifist in the face of the entire German Cabal, who continually iterated

her pacifism, who saw no insult to the American flag in consigning it to a pot to be burned along with the flags of half a dozen or more other foreign nations, some of them enemy nations, who had expressly stated that she would rather go to jail than salute the American flag—did not occur to him until several days had elapsed.

Nor did he at once understand the thought that had inspired her grossly insulting charge. He was in the throes of a Berseker rage and it must run its course before his mind would clear sufficiently for thought. What hurt him most of all was the wanton insult flung at his antecedents, the implication that there was fastened upon him by his German ancestry an ineradicable taint.

He was silent and taciturn throughout supper. Frau Ursula was full of woe concerning poorly turned work at the Red Cross Rooms, and Guido let her ramble on, more or less mechanically offering a word of solace now and then. After supper he went to Yomanato's.

"Time for a walk?" he demanded.

Yomanato went to the window and looked out.

"The moon is full," he said, "and there's a film of snow upon the ground, and a brisk but not a biting wind. And all the trees are encased in silver armor. No, I have no time for a walk. But I will go with you, nevertheless."

"Before we go, read these two letters, will you, and tell me what you think of them," Guido said, handing his friend the two letters which had made him so miserable.

Yomanato read both letters in silence, his dark face inscrutable, giving no hint of the emotions that stirred him as he read. When he had finished, he looked up, smiling broadly.

"She resigned for you," he said, softly. "As you remarked upon a previous occasion, 'Star-Chamber methods.' And they are good patriots and non-pacifists. And you are typically German." He laughed outright.

"I don't see anything to laugh about," Guido retorted, viciously. He wanted to call names, horrid, bad, ill-smelling names such as gutter snipes pelt at each other. But he restrained his tongue, contenting himself with uttering comparatively chaste expletives. His fury chased about wildly, promising to achieve perpetual motion. He was so angry that he could not think. All his sensibilities were

swallowed up in a wave of black, unquenchable, quivering anger.

Yomanato regarded Guido appraisingly. How queer the white races were, after all! How incomprehensible to the Oriental in some of their aspects! Why should this friend of his, who had so many admirable points, give way to such an ungovernable fit of temper which ate up an incredible amount of energy and devitalized both body and mind? He was sorry for Guido, although he did not in the least comprehend how so trifling a matter as the letter of a fanatical, self-important woman could compass so drastic a result. He perceived that the only way to drag his friend out of the chasm of black fury into which he had plunged was to start up the clock-work of his higher mental functions. So he said, tentatively:

"I wonder just what she had in mind when she accused you of the heinous crime of possessing a typically German mind?"

That gave Guido pause, as Yomanato intended that it should. The black cloud of anger showed a tiny rift, the rift deepened, widened, encroached upon the sides of the splitting cloud, and swallowed them up. Guido's mind having cleared, he was again able to think.

"Oh," he said, quite easily, "I fancy what she meant is this. I acknowledge authority. I keep within the law; I believe in fighting for any desirable reform with legal, not extra-legal methods. Consequently she considers my mind over-disciplined, servile, destitute of initiative and ability to think for itself—the charges, you know, which are being made with some justice against the Germans."

"I dare say that is it," Yomanato acquiesced. He was somewhat taken aback by the swiftness with which Guido's mind, having received the proper shock, had righted itself. He reflected that Guido's mind was like a delicate magnetic needle which faithfully registered the slightest deviation. He reflected also upon the incomparable sensitiveness to impressions of the white man's mind, and the slight contempt which he had felt for Guido, while the latter's mentality had served as a battle-field of clashing passions, was considerably modified thereby. One and the same mind could not be translucent to one set of impressions and opaque to another set. Self-discipline might help to deaden

undesirable susceptibilities, but could not entirely eliminate them. In consequence, he now thought less meanly of the white man's deficient self-control.

"I should like to write to Dr. Sheldrake," Guido continued, "and tell him that I do not consider him in the least unamerican. Since they are sincere in their profession of socialistic principles, and see no glaring disparity between socialism and Americanism, it is not for me to hurl so detestable a charge against them. Nevertheless, I cannot help seeing that the disparity exists. Therefore, if I were to continue a socialist, I should become un-american."

Yomanato smiled, delicately ironic.

"And do you really think," he said, "that persons who like Miss Maxwell, and Dr. Sheldrake, too, can see one side and one side only—fanatics, you know—would understand so subtle a distinction?"

"I suppose they wouldn't," Guido assented, grudgingly. The pang of parting from his new friends was pulling violently at his heart strings. He had liked these people so much—so very, very much! And all Miss Maxwell had been able to do with his friendship had been to break it to pieces, to trample on it and soil it, as a naughty child breaks and smashes and defaces a toy which has incurred its displeasure. Dr. Sheldrake, too, without hearing Guido's side of the affair, had calmly accepted the resignation handed in by a third party, and had written him forthwith, denying the principle of pacifism upon which virtually every socialist whom Guido had met, had laid such incisive stress.

It was all rather horrid. If Dr. Sheldrake had stated that the flux and stress of current events had convinced himself and others that absolute pacifism was untenable, and that the plank had therefore been abandoned, he would. Guido reflected, have merely declared himself to be in precisely the same position in which he, Guido, found himself. But to deny it—to deny it outright!

It was, he assured himself once more, very horrid.

His mind swung back once more to Miss Maxwell's allegations.

"I suppose," he said, "Miss Maxwell in saying that my mind is a German mind probably intended to imply that my mind is tradition-ridden, inflexible, incapable of seeing

more than one point of view." He warmed to the pleasant business of analyzing the iniquities of a neighbor. "Now I have always considered myself cursed with a too great versatility in receiving and sustaining impressions. I seem to see all sides at once. I am, if anything, too vacillating—a little spineless even. I see all sides plainly and in such vigorous chiaroscuro that I have difficulty sometimes in finally deciding which side of the question makes the most unequivocal—perhaps I should say the least equivocal—appeal."

"Yes," Yomanato assented, "that is true. I have noticed it." He tapped the letters lightly with his forefinger as he returned them to Guido. "I would pay no more attention to these or to the people who wrote them. Our gray matter is too precious to be wasted self-destructively upon things such as these."

"You are right, Yomanato," said Guido. "What a wonder you are, anyhow. Is it your race, or yourself, that enables you to preserve such an unshaken composure no matter what happens?"

Yomanato smiled gently.

"My race," he said, softly, "and my religion."

"Your religion," Guido said, teasingly. "Buddhism or Shinto?"

"Perhaps—Christianity."

"Yomanato," Guido said, "will you not at last explain to me what you mean by saying that a man may be both a Christian and a Buddhist? Always, always, when we get upon this subject, you lead on to a certain point and then draw back. Why do you do this? Why not be candid and tell me what you think upon this topic of topics?"

Yomanato rose, smiling the sphinx-like smile of a race that was old when Europe was young and America, from the viewpoint of civilization, still unborn.

"I cannot," said Yomanato. "You must find the right path through your own efforts, or not at all. I have indicated to you the goal—more than that I cannot do."

Guido, puzzled and a little hurt, did not reply.

"Come," said Yomanato, "the full moon waits. The silver trees beckon. The night wind sings in the branches of the trees. Let us go forth and take thought of nothing for an hour but the exceeding beauty of the earth, and the



magic of the night, and the wonder and marvel of all that is."

Guido rose and followed Yomanato to the door. At the door, his hand upon the knob, the Japanese stopped.

"In the Twelfth Chapter of the Sutra of the Diamond-Cutter," he said, "the ultimate reward promised—the reward corresponding to the Christian hope of eternal life—is that 'they shall be endowed with the Highest Wonder.' Ponder that, my friend.

"Come, the night-wind's song may bring us nearer to the heart of the eternal mystery than any creed invented by man."

CHAPTER XVI

IN the early days of Guido's infatuation with socialistic pretensions, Guido and Elschen had been drawn closer together by their faith in the common cause. It had made the winter very much easier for Guido, so easy that, although he did not succeed in conjuring a future in which the miracle of loving Elschen should have come to pass, he began to question himself seriously why he did not and could not and never would love her.

That question, of course, would never have been asked by himself if a constricted outlook upon life had not for the moment ambushed his wider sympathies and richer concepts. Had these not been temporarily in abeyance he would have perceived that the thongs that bound him to Janet were less primitive than the ties of a merely romantic love, and far more fundamental. They were, in brief, compounded not so much of the elemental passions, as of the spiritual necessity which Guido shared with Janet—the necessity to live life as broadly, as richly, as comprehensively and as comprehensively, as kindly, and above all, as humanly as possible. It was this basic necessity of their characters that bound these two together—that bound them as with physical fetters, manacled them and yoked them beyond peradventure of escape.

With Guido's desertion of socialism, another change came over the relation between Elschen and himself. She told him roundly that she thought he was acting unwarrantably. Her mentality was too feebly endowed and too underdeveloped to make possible a sympathetic understanding of his position and of the conscientious scruples which had torn and rent him. She did not attempt to understand. She condemned. Her strong pro-German sympathies fortified her position. War, justifiable in Germany's case, was unjustifiable in America's. She accused Guido of being "pro-American," and of sacrificing his higher—meaning thereby his socialistic and pacifist—convictions in order to

pander to the worser part of his nature, which, she said, embraced a truckling partisanship of a country as grossly corrupt, as materialistic, as graft and capital-ridden as America.

Upon these occasions Guido maintained a truly god-like calm. Once, and once only, he essayed to argue with Elschen.

"I plead guilty to being 'pro-American,'" he said. "You are pro-German, you know——"

"Pardon," she interrupted him. "I am merely fair. Germany is right. Hence, in being pro-German, I am not showing favoritism but am merely being honorable and just."

Strange to say, this did not anger Guido. For a new thought had struck him forcibly while Elschen was delivering herself of these remarkable sentiments and opinions. Pro-Germans and socialists, socialists and pro-Germans, apparently had this in common. Not only did they believe that their cause was the only right cause—of course everybody who espoused any cause whatever did the same—but they condemned as insincere, unjust and dishonest all persons who failed to agree with them. That was a worthwhile thought. He laid it tenderly away among the lavender and old lace of convictions which must some day be requisitioned to round out his conception of life in its entirety.

There was, he deplored it, a tendency in the press and in the people as well to regard all German sympathizers in the same light and to portray every German as an unmitigated brute both at home and abroad, and to ascribe to every German the abominable motives which had impelled the German Military Staff to enter the War. He vividly remembered Grossvater Geddes' dying words. Guido had been too deeply shocked at the moment to analyze the brilliant dialectics which had been the heart-broken old man's swan-song. Later on, he had dissected Grossvater Geddes' theory, which coincided with the generally accepted belief that every German, day-laborer, peasant, and college professor alike, was imbued with a lust for world conquest. This Guido believed to be a false interpretation of the Teutonic psychology, and he saw no gain in maintaining a fiction in matters of such stupendous

importance. From every personal experience, from everything he had read in German newspapers and magazines, from utterances made by Haeckel, Eucken and Fulda, those idols of by-gone days, the true diagnosis of the German Disease seemed to point to the fact that hatred of England—hatred begotten of fear—was the virulent poison which, after effectually deranging the German organism, had caused this world cataclysm.

And what was fear of England, with the consequent impugning of her every motive—but evil-mindedness?

Here then, was yet another singular point in which the socialistic mind and the German mind coincided—evil-mindedness in dealing with others, consisting of an unscrupulous, not to say dishonest construction of every ideal, motive, thought and conviction which they do not happen to share.

Germany—more than one socialist had pointed out the fact to him—was the most highly socialized state in the world. How close then was the correlation between that fact and the twin habits of evil-mindedness in ascribing base motives without any foundation whatsoever, and inability to recognize evil when evil is not a mere hypothesis but an established certainty?

Was it, furthermore, more than a mere coincidence that Haeckel, the author of the monistic belief, which would reduce life and spirit as well to purely mechanistic activities, and Marx, the founder of scientific socialism, which would degrade the act of living into a bundle of sordid and unbeautiful motives, had both been natives of Germany?

Elschen, all the while, had scolded him volubly. But Elschen, when she scolded, did not raise her melodious voice or distort her pretty, soft little face, so that, barring the substance of her words, her scoldings were no more effectual than the peckings of a canary against the wires of its cage. While Elschen scolded, Guido had had his little think as comfortably as if a Victrola had been running off Offenbach's Barcarole or some equally bromidic selection. He became aware, suddenly, that Elschen had ceased speaking some time ago.

"I don't believe you heard a word of what I said, Guido," she said.

"I don't believe I did," Guido rejoined. "Or, to be

exact, I did hear your opening sentences. They started me thinking—I'm sorry I paid no attention to all the rest you said."

"You don't seem to think what I said of any account," Elschen said, pouting.

"Of the greatest possible account," Guido replied, gravely. "I thought an entire volume of commentaries upon your first three or four sentences."

Elschen flushed.

"Is that sarcasm?" she asked, an angry light in her usually placid eyes.

"Sarcasm? No," said Guido, bitterly. "It's the absolute truth."

Elschen was puzzled. As she regarded Guido, her perplexity grew. There had been times during the last few months when she had sensed a certain ineluctable quality in Guido, which filled her with alarm and dismay. There was beginning to dawn upon her the nature of the abyss that yawned between them. Only love, she felt, could successfully span that abyss. But here her thoughts lost their venturesomeness, paused and slunk fearfully away. There were dark doubts which must not inhabit in the mind of Guido von Estritz's intended.

She began to take him to task again. This time he listened.

"It's the cause of the poor, Guido, that you are deserting."

"But I will never desert the poor, Elschen," he said, speaking with intense earnestness. "That I can safely promise you."

"Then why abandon their cause?"

"Because, in narrowing all life down to exclude all things but their own class interests, their own necessities, their own desires, the proletariat is guilty of treason to the human race."

"Treason?"

"Yes, it's a hard word. But that's how I see it now."

"And do not the rich betray the poor day after day—"

"Undoubtedly some of them do. But it is a pernicious belief to hold that every rich man, simply because he is rich, is necessarily bad, and that conversely, every poor man simply because he is poor, is therefore good."

"But the poor are better and kinder than the rich."

"Are they?" Guido replied. "I wonder."

"But you said Christ taught socialism?" Elschen launched this telling shaft at Guido with undisguised glee.

"Yes, that is what I thought."

"Well, I don't understand how you can change your mind about such matters—about Christ—the way you are doing."

"If you mean about Christ's having taught socialism—well, I'm not sure whether he did or not."

"But, Guido," she became gentler, her anxiety for his spiritual welfare breaking through the flimsy mask of her anger, "Guido, you must surely be able to make up your mind one way or the other."

"Why must I?"

"Because, if you make up your mind that Christ did teach socialism, you'd go back to socialism, wouldn't you?"

Guido rose precipitately.

"That does not follow," he said.

"Guido!" she was outraged.

"Look here, Elschen. I no longer believe in socialism. I believe that socialism is a mischievous, reactionary tendency because its avowed object is to further the interests of one class only. Now, even if Christ did teach socialism, as I once thought and as I am by no means certain that he did not, it would not bring me back to the socialistic fold."

Elschen rose, white with indignation.

"I will speak to you no more to-day," she said. "I hope that before I see you again you will have thought better of all this."

Guido went home palpitating with hope. It was, perhaps, not a pretty emotion for him to entertain at the moment, but it was the emotion that floated to the surface of his mind. Elschen might possibly become so incensed with him that she would break the engagement. He did not phrase it so definitely—we usually slur over our own egoistic desires as much as possible, but in more or less inchoate form the hope for an estrangement was continually present in his thoughts from that day on.

The rupture with Dr. Sheldrake hurt him infinitely more than the rupture with Miss Maxwell. To see the hero whom we have worshiped turn to clay overnight is not

an agreeable experience, and the thought that he would never see the elf-child Mazie again, nor witness her innocent delight in her garden of window boxes, nor see the garden itself, with its pansies, and scarlet sage and "daffy-down-dillies," cut deep.

"At least," he said, "I've only made a fool of myself this time. Let's see how my record stands now—" and he enumerated his list of misdeeds, "Destroyed my mother's happiness, acted like a beast toward my best friend, kissed a courtesan, engaged myself to a girl I don't love and made a D. F. of myself generally. Pretty," he commented, "especially pretty for a chap with a Destiny."

His opinion of himself dropped to zero. He thought his character had been damaged beyond repair. He saw in himself an inconsistent, rambling, invertebrate know-nothing, a weakling, an incapable and a wretch.

Had he but known it, his character, his purpose and motive in life were crystallizing and solidifying, were being purged and strengthened and sanctified at the very time when he thought himself most contemptible.

His health, however, had not been improved by the spiritual vicissitudes of the winter. February was a lush, soft, summery month with sudden flurries of snow and quick gusts of hot sunshine that made winter-garmented bodies steam and perspire unwholesomely. Guido felt fagged and nervous. He lost his appetite. He became irritable and cross. Once he and Elschen quarreled violently and he went home feeling a brute but jubilant because he thought the hour of his release was near at hand. But Elschen sent a letter by messenger the very same evening, saying she had been horrid to her dear Guido and would he please forgive her. Guido wrote her a brief note saying everything was all right, and despatched it by the same messenger who had brought her letter. But he felt that everything was dead wrong.

March came, and still the President refrained from declaring war. The tension had become almost unbearable. People were beginning to realize that when the emotional strain of an entire nation has been raised to the nth power it must snap—and, in snapping, create war. Only a spark was now needed to ignite the heaped-up emotional tinder. No one knew what that spark would be, but all knew it

was coming. It came at last in the Zimmerman conspiracy, the infamy of which startled even a world grown callous to infamy because infamy, during the past four years, had become the commonest commodity in the world.

"That means war," said Guido, coming into the room with an extra tucked under his arm and another in his hand. "That means war."

"We thought it meant war when the *Lusitania* was sunk," said Frau Ursula, "and we thought it meant war when the Arabic went down, and when Dumba was unmasked, and Dernburg was sent about his business, and when the passport swindles happened, and yet it didn't. Perhaps it won't mean war this time, either."

She had spoken in a peculiar, forced tone, almost perfunctorily. Guido looked at her sharply.

"Mother, what's happened? You are very pale."

"Am I?" she flung back with mechanical indifference.

He misinterpreted her remark.

"Oh, I see—it's because you promised to let me go to war!"

Frau Ursula's pallor deepened perceptibly. An emotion akin to terror seemed to leap from her eyes. Mere anticipation of danger could not have so desperate an effect. There was something more back of Frau Ursula's agitation, and Guido urged his mother to tell him what had occurred to move her so deeply. She resisted his appeal, apparently because she was too disturbed and too overwrought to speak. Suddenly she said, spasmodically:

"You will have to be very brave."

There then rushed upon him with the shock of a hurricane a realization of what she had been trying to tell him right along.

"*Mutterchen*, is it Otto?"

She nodded.

Guido stood very still. He knew, without being told, that Otto had been killed, but his mind refused to believe it, and he asked, after a moment:

"Killed?"

Frau Ursula nodded again.

And yet he did not realize it. He stared at his mother stupidly. His mother's confirmation of what he had guessed the moment she had told him that he would need to be

brave did not in the least help to vivify his realization of the unbelievable. He tried hard to grasp the idea of Otto's death, and failed. If Otto had been killed would he, Guido, be standing there so quietly, so comfortably? If Otto had been killed, panic would have overwhelmed him, Guido, and he would know by some unmistakable token, by a standing still of the sun, or the moon, that the impossible had become possible. It was quite incredible that Otto should be dead and he, Guido, so still and composed.

The stillness, indeed, which had invaded him, which was engulfing himself his mother and his environment, was quite unbelievable.

He said, abruptly:

"Are they sure? He may have been taken prisoner?"

"No, he is not missing. He was killed outright by a hand grenade. His sergeant was with him——"

Her voice trailed off supinely. She began to weep. Her tears were more than Guido at the moment could bear. They accomplished what mere words had been unable to achieve. He had a sharp, wrenching, stabbing comprehension that this thing, preposterous and incredible as it was, was nevertheless true. Otto was dead!

Without attempting to comfort his mother, oblivious even of her grief in the magnitude of his own, he turned on his heel and went to his room, and there he was again assailed by doubt as to the credibility of the report.

Cecil's death, of course, should have taught him that men die on the battlefield now as formerly, but to think of Otto, with his strong, buoyant, aggressive personality as extinct, seemed even more impossible than to imagine Cecil dead.

He seemed to be confronted by a wall of such exceeding, subtly contrived thickness that mere mind could not hope to penetrate or pierce it. He felt ill, shaken, faint.

And again he had a physical sensation of enormous quiet, as if all the noises and sounds from the street and in the house had suffered instantaneous interruption. The children's voices that penetrated to his room from the street seemed flat and artificial, mere ghosts of real sound. His room had suddenly assumed enormous proportions, had grown ridiculously, tremendously big.

He sat down upon his bed. In all his life he had not

experienced such a terrible, such a shocking upheaval. He felt numb and cold. Otto dead. Otto. Otto. He repeated the name to himself, as if the familiar sound must have virtue to pierce through the strange penumbra of numbness than encased him. Then, as once before, an acute realization of the tragic fact struck home, and in a moment he was transformed from a half-paralyzed, inert, benumbed creature to a throbbing, terribly alert mass of flesh and spirit whose one sensation was that of anguish unspeakable.

Otto dead. Otto dead fighting for the Allies, fighting for England and France against Germany! A host of recollections swept over Guido. Phantoms of Otto at all ages seemed to spring up about him. He saw his friend in every conceivable act of their common life—on the school-bench, on the foot-ball grounds, trudging along over sun-parched pavements, reading, writing, burning the midnight oil in his courageous efforts to work his way through college.

He had mourned for Cecil. He still mourned for him.

But Otto's death was in the nature of an amputation. Part of himself had died on France's blood-drenched soil; part of his childhood, part of his youth, part of his heart lay buried over there.

At last he burst into tears. His chest labored horribly. Blinded with tears, struggling automatically to check them, he rose and staggered through the room. A strange cry, like the cry of an animal, broke involuntarily from his throat. A terrible vertigo assailed him. The room seemed to be moving from under his feet. He moaned in an agony which had become largely physical, and he put out his hand to save himself from falling. But the piece of furniture for which he reached suddenly became endowed with life and moved away, further and further away from him. In vain he struggled to seize the receding, marble-topped table. It evaded his grasp. Spinning about, like a top, he crashed down. Then it seemed that he had not missed the table after all, but instead of moving to the table, the table had moved to him. He was distinctly conscious that it was following him, and that what he had thought a marble slab was in reality a beautiful, snowy-white sail. Then the sail struck his head, and he became aware that it was very hard and cold. After that—oblivion.

Guido was very ill for over a fortnight. The succession of nervous shocks which he had endured, culminating in Otto's death, had prepared the way for a nervous breakdown, and striking his head as he fell had complicated matters. For a week Dr. Erdman came three times a day, while Dr. Koenig made his headquarters at Frau Ursula's, and, as no trained nurse was to be had, took the day watch while Frau Ursula took charge of the patient at night.

Guido was unconscious part of the time, part of the time he was delirious. Delirium is a terrible unmasker of the soul. Let the man who possesses a guilty secret tremble lest he fall ill with a fever which, displacing his normal self, brings to the surface that queer medley of disjointed moods, dislocated actions, clandestine desires which go to the making of a man's ego. Guido's fever laid bare his clandestine hope of being released from his engagement to Elschen with a searching thoroughness which was an ordeal of exceeding bitterness to Frau Ursula and to the old physician who loved the boy as a son. Guido called incessantly upon Janet, imploring her to forgive him, assuring her over and over how it had all been a hideous mistake. Frau Ursula and Dr. Koenig exchanged glances of wild dismay. But they did not discuss the matter. They shrank away from it as if it had been a shameful thing.

One evening, after a particularly painful outbreak, in which the boy's delirium-crazed mind, like an avenging angel, mouthed ruthlessly about his share in his mother's divorce, Frau Ursula, entirely unnerved by the memories evoked by Guido's ravings as well as by the hideous fear that the boy might not recover, went for a short, brisk walk before relieving Dr. Koenig for the night.

The evening was cold but clear. A bitingly cold wind swept huge bales of cloud before it, through which the moon shone intermittently, tinging the tattered edges with burnt orange, Nile green and ocher. Spectacularly the evening was perfect; from a weather viewpoint, it could hardly have been worse. Frau Ursula, feeling the imperious necessity of strenuous locomotion, ran blindly down the street, her head ducked to shield her mouth from the worst blasts of the wind which cut and slashed the skin like icicle-tipped barbs.

A man, coming in the opposite direction, his coat collar drawn high above his ears, his hat low over his brow, was walking as blindly as Frau Ursula. A collision became inevitable. With a cry of apology each sprang back, and as they rebounded they involuntarily took passing toll of each other.

"Erich!"

"Ursula!"

They stared at each blindly, stupidly. What grotesque chance, thought the woman, had played her this trick. She was about to step aside and pass Hauser when he put out a restraining hand.

"Ursula, I was on my way to your house. I heard only to-night of Guido's illness. I wanted to know if there is anything I could do—there is a famous physician whom I would like to recommend. Has he really concussion of the brain? Or is it merely a nervous break-down?"

Frau Ursula did not reply. The meeting seemed to her like a page out of a fairy story. It was the last thing—the very last thing she had expected would happen.

The recoil of feeling after the hour of nerve-shattering self-accusations on Guido's part to which she had been condemned to listen, was too much for her. She burst into tears, not gentle, delicate, seemly tears, but hard, cruel tears accompanied by gusts of sobs.

"Ursula, Guido isn't——"

"No, no," she cried, her abandon arrested by the suggestion of so gruesome a possibility.

Hauser took her arm and drew her into the shelter of a stone wall which bounded a bit of ground higher than the rest. He had been rehearsing the speech with which he had intended greeting her, at the very moment when he had run flush into her as into the teeth of a gale. And like a gale, once they had reached the comparative shelter of the wall, she opened upon him.

"Why do you ask me whether you can do anything to help me?" she demanded, indignantly, passion making her utterly oblivious of the tragic humor of the situation—a divorced, middle-aged couple shouting lustily at each other to make themselves heard above the fury of the storm, for all the world as if they were a pair of clandestine

lovers indulging in the bitter-sweet of making up after a quarrel.

"How dare you ask me whether you can do anything to help me?" she continued. "You treated the boy like a dog when he went to you—he offered to go of his own free will when he heard that you were in trouble. He is such a good boy, such a wonderful boy—he didn't even want to tell me what you had said to him, he wanted to shield you, *you*, who had treated him like the dirt under your feet!" Such was the amiable construction which Frau Ursula put upon Guido's apparent reluctance in repeating what had passed between him and Hauser on the evening of the failure—a reluctance which, as we know, was due to far less beautiful motives.

Frau Ursula had paused, literally for want of breath, for the wind which had abated a moment before, had accumulated new strength during its brief abatement, and now tore and howled about them like a thousand devils. Force perforce they were silent until the storm's worst fury had spent itself.

"I know I treated Guido abominably that day," said Hauser. "I am heartily ashamed of myself. I was ashamed of myself immediately after speaking. More than that. I was ashamed of myself *while* I was speaking. Ursula, I want you to know that it has always been that way with me—God knows why the human heart should be capable of being at the same time a receptacle of pure and holy thoughts and a reservoir of desires so unclean—I am speaking of spiritual desires—that a man turns sick in contemplating them after the spasm of anger, or envy, of hatred has passed. I want you to understand thoroughly, Ursula, that whenever I treated Guido badly as a child, I was filled with remorse afterwards. But envy held me fast—you understand, don't you? I wanted you to know this. I was too proud to tell you before. I am proud no longer. My pride is shattered and crumbled to dust," he concluded bitterly.

Frau Ursula's resilient heart vibrated in quick response to Hauser's words. Quite unconsciously she placed her hand against his overcoat. Her hand was very small, the hand of the patrician born and bred, whose forebears for many generations have not been called upon to do manual

labor. Her hands, during their brief era of happiness, had been a prolific source of compliments from Hauser. She did not think of this at the moment, and if her gesture was inspired by coquetry, the coquetry, at least, was wholly self-unconscious. But the action stirred the strong man beside her profoundly. He read into it a meaning which she had not intended to convey. He placed his own fur-gloved hands about the slender hand encased in white kid, and completely enveloped it, as in a shaped, fur-lined casket.

In spite of the cold, Frau Ursula felt the warm blood mounting to her cheeks. She, too, was profoundly moved. There was no mistaking the man's intense emotion. Suddenly, as women will do in the rich moments of life, she threw caution, modesty, pride and discretion to the winds.

"Erich," she said, "for the love of God let us be frank with each other. We have suffered enough—both of us—to have done with childish assumptions of pride and disdain and self-idolatry. Do you love me still? If you do, say so frankly. If you do not, if there is someone else, then be man enough to tell me and I will be woman enough to bear it."

"Ursula!" His voice rang jubilantly over the wild paroxysm of the wind-tossed night. "If there is someone else! My dear, my dear, how often must I tell you that you are and always have been and always will be the only woman in the world for me. I have many faults, many shortcomings, many deficiencies, but this one virtue I may truthfully claim; I have been constant in my love as few men have been constant—as no man can be more constant. Nor do I take much pride in this my sole, eighteen-carat virtue. For you, dear heart, you, my lovely wife, crystallized and fixed my constancy which, lacking so pure a magnet, so incomparable a lode-star, might not have been constancy at all, but something far different."

A speech which proves that the most prosaic of individuals, when subjected to sufficient strain and stress by the great passion of life, can rise to the lyric heights of *Vers Libre*.

"Oh, Hauser," said Frau Ursula, "why did we quarrel? What a lot of time we have wasted."

"We quarreled," said Hauser, "because I was jealous,

and I was jealous because I doubted you. I was a fool, Ursula."

"Ah!" Frau Ursula breathed heavily. "And is there no doubt in your mind now, Erich? Are you quite sure that you were mistaken?"

"Quite." Hauser wondered whether honesty required that he should acquaint his wife with the manner in which his doubts had suffered their final eclipse.

Frau Ursula continued:

"You have made your confession, and I must make mine. I have had much time in the last two years to think matters over. I feel that I am not entirely blameless. I can see now that you had abundant grounds for believing what you did believe. Guido has helped me see that. I should have told you, at the time of our marriage, that at one time I loved Guido's father. He did not love me, he did not even suspect that I loved him. I should have told you all this at the time we arranged our bargain. If I had had the courage to do so, much pain would have been spared us both."

What these few simple words cost Frau Ursula in pride, no one, not even Hauser, was ever to know. Nor was it only her pride that was prostrated. In slaying her pride she had slain the sacred memory of the unrequited love of her youth. Had she loved Guido's father more than she loved Hauser? Who shall say? Love is not a commodity to which the yardstick or the pound-weight can be applied. Rather than more she had loved the second Guido differently than she loved Hauser. She had given him all her young enthusiasm and admiration. Her spirit had done homage to his. Her mind had proclaimed him her master. Her heart had acclaimed him her conqueror. None of these subtle and delicate emotions had been brought into play by Hauser. Her love for him was the comfortable, unimaginative, unromantic, comradely love of middle-age. Frau Ursula was too shrewd a student of human nature to expect the emotions which robe the morning of life in mists of royal purple to be revived at high noon. But she had clung fondly to her dream-love. All that was over now. Resolutely she set her face against it.

"Ursula, I have something more to tell you. Henceforth there must be nothing between us but absolute truth. I

am afraid I would have continued in my stupid suspicion if Guido had not made plain to you that of which you spoke just now—your love for his father."

"Guido!" Frau Ursula flushed. "But Guido did not know!"

"You mean, you had not told him. He knew. He guessed the truth."

"Am I so easy to read as all that?" Frau Ursula asked, constrainedly.

"I wish you had been so easy to read—then might I have guessed the truth, too. But I was blinded with passion, with desire. Ursula, Guido meant to do us both a good turn when he came and told me; I promised him, by the way, that I would never divulge what passed between us that evening, and here I am, telling you——"

Frau Ursula, profiting by the bitter lessons of the past, said bravely:

"He will not mind. His greatest wish is to see us reconciled. But why, in heaven's name, Erich, did you not come to me then? Was it so hard to frame an apology?"

Hauser sighed.

"Bankruptcy was staring me in the face."

"Ah," cried Frau Ursula, "Guido was right in that, also! And was pride so much dearer to you than love?"

"Pride had nothing to do with it. Honor demanded that I keep away from you. I had no choice in the matter."

"Oh, Erich!"

The wind roared about them and beat against them and tore at their hats and their faces and their hair. But a wonderful feeling of security filled Frau Ursula. She had learned the hardest lesson of life, for she had learned that the self-imposed morale of no two individuals is alike. Hauser had lacked the red-corpuscle faith in herself which had seemed to her an essential and a pre-requisite of love; he, on the other hand, had seen in his financial difficulties an insuperable handicap while she would have perceived no impropriety in his approaching her and attempting a reconciliation in spite of his monetary embarrassments. In this point then, his sense of fineness was more delicately developed than hers.

And then a strange thing happened. The diamond-dust-strewn, dream-part of love, which she had so overdosed

with mandragora as to think dead, very cautiously, delicately shook itself, and stretched itself, and reached out its phantom arms and reared its specter head, and sprang back into full-blooded life.

And its objective was not the second Guido, but Erich Hauser.

So it happened that these two foot-sore and weary pilgrims of Middle Age and Love came safe to harbor at last.

CHAPTER XVII

THE better part of March had blown itself away in spasms of bluster and splutterings of snow before Guido recovered sufficiently to sit up in a chair, side-propped and underpropped with pillows and cushions, and looking a mere ghost of his former self. Both physicians had warned Frau Ursula that his convalescence was destined to extend over a much longer period than his actual illness.

Followed dismal weeks. Did Guido remember Otto's death? His engagement to Elschen? The rupture with Dr. Sheldrake and Miss Maxwell? The latest developments of the War? Frau Ursula and Dr. Koenig waited for Guido to take the lead in conversation, confining themselves to the most commonplace topics when the initiative devolved upon them. Diffident at first, with the rambling, hesitating diffidence of convalescence, his mind one day took a long leap forward, and he plunged headlong into all the topics which Frau Ursula and Dr. Koenig had been at such pains to avoid in his presence.

"How's the War coming along, anyhow?" he demanded one morning, sitting at a sunny window half-open to admit the air which, warmed by the sun, was freighted with the promise of spring. Sparrow fledglings chattered under the roof, the shrubs in the front yards were robed in the delicate greenish mist which adumbrates the opening of the leaf-buds; the drip-dripping of water told of spring thaws; a myriad of plaintively thin voices seemed to vitalize the air with a pean of thanksgiving because spring was at last at hand.

"How's the little old War getting on?" Guido repeated, for Dr. Koenig did not reply. "Have we declared war yet? Have we? I believe we have. Do tell me."

"We have not yet declared war," Dr. Koenig replied, irritably.

"But we will."

"If they give us enough time I suppose we shall," said Dr. Koenig, dryly.

"Well," said Guido, "mother's got to let me enlist. Otto's death—Cecil's, too, of course—has given a personal tang to my indignation. ("So he remembers about Otto," thought Dr. Koenig.) And I cannot bear to think," Guido continued, "that Otto had the grit to go and face the music while I stayed at home playing 'possum. Do you know what I feel like, *Herr Doktor*? I feel that if we don't go to war now we are making a funk-hole of all America. That's what."

"Well, we are going to be in the War before many more days have gone by," said Dr. Koenig, grimly. "We have been in a state of armed neutrality for some time, and we have just been translated into a state of war."

"Well," cried Guido, "isn't a state of war war?"

"No," said Dr. Koenig, and explained to him the easy stages along which America was traveling into the War. "Let me see," Dr. Koenig continued, "to-morrow is the first of April. It would be great *Aprilscherz*, would it not, if we were to declare war to-morrow? Germany has been so damnably certain, you know, that the dollar-chasing, war-profiteering Yankees will never, never, never dare to face the invincible Mailed Fist."

"The last I remember was the Zimmerman business. What installments since then?"

"Oh, the usual torpedoing of vessels, that's all," said the Doctor, nonchalantly. Suddenly his pianissimo manner, artificially cultivated for Guido's sake, went to pieces as naturally and as quickly as a snow-man collapses under a warm sun.

"What sort of a man have we got in the White House, anyhow?" he roared. "I admired Mr. Wilson as much as anybody at first. But what sort of a liver has he got? What sort of a heart? Spleen? Bowels?" It is impossible adequately to describe the ire with which Dr. Koenig questioned the condition of Mr. Wilson's internal organs. "'He kept us out of war.' That a fine slogan for a man to be elected upon. It's a dastardly, cowardly, sub-human, white-corpuscle sort of a slogan. Upon my word, no wonder that Germany thinks we are a lot of lily-livered, silk-stockinged, money-eating, safety-first

lubbers. Would to heaven we had a red-blooded, one hundred per cent American in the White House at this crisis. It's not merely France and England that are in danger. We are in danger. All humanity is in danger. Freedom is in danger. Democracy is in danger. Your grandfather and I, my lad, fought the Prussian autocracy over half a century ago and we were beaten. All Europe is fighting it to-day and will be beaten unless America jumps into the breach. And if America does not jump in and save the day, she will, in ten or fifteen years, have to face a war of such prodigious girth that the present war will seem a mere pygmy in comparison.

"That's my prediction, my boy."

Guido sat staring at the old physician rather limply.

"I hope I have not excited you," said Dr. Koenig, with sudden contrition.

"Not at all. If you don't mind my saying so, I do not agree with you on Mr. Wilson. I think him marvelous."

Dr. Koenig became violently agitated.

"Marvelous," he cried. "I do not see how any intelligent person can say that he thinks that man marvelous. There is nothing marvelous about him. He has a third-rate brain. He is a third-rate president. We have never had a President who would not have done better than Wilson did."

"In what way?" Guido asked, half-amused and half-vexed.

"In every way," shouted Dr. Koenig. "Do you think T. R. would have kept up the farce of the Lusitania notes the way Wilson did? Do you think he would have prayed for 'Peace without Victory'? Do you think he would have allowed a slogan like that rascally 'He kept us out of War' legend to be used on his presidential campaign? He would have considered such a slogan tantamount to an indictment for pusillanimity. No, sir. What this country needs at the helm of state in a crisis like this is not a phrase-monger, but a freedom-loving, fearless, fighting American."

"Aren't you going a bit too far?" Guido inquired, with as much emphasis as he could muster, which was not very much.

"Have I excited you?" Dr. Koenig demanded, suddenly recollecting that a political altercation is not the best tonic

in the world for a patient recovering from a nervous collapse.

"Goodness, no," said Guido. "It warms my heart to hear you bluster, *Herr Doktor*. That's what made this country what it is, isn't it? Difference in political opinions. And the resulting equation."

Dr. Koenig grumbled violently.

"I suppose so," he said, "I suppose so. But sometimes I cannot help wishing that for just a brief span of time we might be under autocratic rule——"

"With T. R. as the autocrat?" Guido demanded, laughing.

Dr. Koenig smiled, rather fatuously.

"I suppose I am somewhat foolish about Mr. Roosevelt," he said. "But then, in spite of all his buncombe, he is such a man."

"So is Mr. Wilson," said Guido. "You know the Germans pretended to be highly indignant during the presidential campaign because the press and the posters compared Mr. Wilson to Abraham Lincoln. But the comparison is justified. There are innumerable points in the character of these two men which lend themselves to comparison. Lincoln, in his day, was criticised quite as severely as Wilson is being carped at now. Lincoln's critics, like Mr. Wilson's, claimed that his policy was vacillating and shifting. You, who lived through the Civil War, need not be reminded that Carl Schurz, while a member of Lincoln's cabinet, wrote Lincoln expostulating against his lack of policy, and suggesting a definite line of action. And you probably also remember that Lincoln told Schurz politely but firmly to mind his own business."

"Yes, that is true," Dr. Koenig assented, unwillingly. "Nevertheless, Lincoln was a strong man and Wilson is a weak man."

"Don't you believe it," Guido exclaimed. "Fifty years from now the perspective of history will have assured Mr. Wilson a niche in the Hall of Fame quite as secure and as spacious as two other niches whose occupants I need not recall."

"Bah!" Dr. Koenig barked out. "Nonsense! Sacrilege! Absurd!"

"Mr. Wilson is an idealist of the purest water," Guido went on, "and because he is an idealist, it took him four

years to find out that Germany is really an outlaw and will continue an outlaw if the present régime continues. He is an idealist of a breed typically American. Washington was such an idealist when he refused the crown that was offered him; Lincoln was such an idealist, who, had he lived, would have saved the South from the horrors of the Reconstruction Period. Hamilton was such an idealist, when he fought the battle for Assumption and incidentally for the honor of America. Wilson proved himself such an idealist when he coined the phrase 'Peace without Victory'; for what he meant by that was that the European policy of robbing the conquered must be done away with in this war if a real and enduring peace is to ensue. And you may rest assured if we do go to war—and I hope we are on the very brink of the crater at last—Mr. Wilson is going to do some remarkable things during the war or after the war is over to put an end to that iniquitous spoils system."

"I don't believe it," said Dr. Koenig, snappishly. "The man is a mere shallow opportunist."

"Fifty years hence," Guido began, and was interrupted by Dr. Koenig with:

"Well, I will not live fifty years more. Though I would like to. If only to see you work out your Destiny."

"My Destiny!" Guido exclaimed, bitterly. He remembered how, not very long ago, he had thought for a very short span of time that to further socialism might be his Destiny. He frowned. "If you talk Destiny to me, you will bring on a relapse."

Dr. Koenig laughed, a little uneasily.

"Guido," he said, presently, "there is one big piece of news which has happened while you are ill and which I have not told you anything about."

"Well, what is it?"

"There has been a revolution in Russia."

The boy bent forward anxiously, nervously.

"When?" he asked. "Tell me all about it."

"It seems to have started way back in February—reports are conflicting—but one thing is certain, Russia now presents an epic opportunity for a man of high ideals who has been bred on freedom's soil and knows the true mean-

ing of liberty, knows that liberty is not license, and that democracy is not socialism."

Guido fell back in his chair, suddenly weak and limp. The talk and the excitement had exhausted him.

"Don't," he said, feebly. "I cannot discuss this now." But after a moment he said: "*Herr Doktor*, usually when there is a revolution the political prisoners are released. Has anything of the sort happened in Russia?"

"Yes," said Dr. Koenig, "yes."

A flush of excitement stained Guido's pale face crimson.

"I am very tired," he said. "I will lie down now."

Dr. Koenig helped Guido across the room to his bed, and having drawn the shades, left the room.

But Guido did not fall asleep. He was tensely, nervously, almost unnaturally awake. He was convinced that Dr. Koenig had spoken about the Russian Revolution for some ulterior reason. He had, probably, desired and expected that Guido would ask the question which he had asked. Probably, also, he had anticipated and wished that Guido would question him further and demand to be told if there was any news of Varvara Alexandrovna. Guido felt certain that there was news, news of such a nature that it touched him very keenly. Much has been written about the torments of the mind which anticipates unpleasant news, and the comparative serenity with which the certainty, be it ever so dismal, is finally embraced. Nevertheless there are moments in life, when the suspense of uncertainty is preferable to a painful certainty, as Guido realized overwhelmingly.

Guido felt that he was not yet strong enough to endure any severe nervous shock. With all his heart he desired that his mother had been restored to liberty, but he dreaded to be told details.

When the last is said he was frightened. Never in all his life had he felt so destitute of the common, every-day, small courage of life, for in one of those flashes of almost clairvoyant insight that come most frequently when the flesh, weakened by illness, least obscures the spirit, he apprehended that he was about to face the greatest ordeal with which all life, it might be, would confront him. Whether his mother was already liberated, whether she was still in Russia, whether she would come to him in America

or send to him a second and more urgent, more imperative summons, he was of course unable to say. But he knew that in some form or other Varvara Alexandrovna's will and his were going to clash, were going to come into a terrific, soul-shaking collision.

He grew sick with apprehension. Was she on American soil now? He almost thought so. Dr. Koenig was not clever in disguising the feelings and the thought which happened to agitate him, and the peculiarly cautious way in which he had avoided meeting Guido's eyes, led Guido to suppose that his conjecture might be true.

Nor was Guido unconscious of a sensation of shame. To feel anything at such a moment but gratitude for her deliverance!

"What am I made of, anyhow?" he muttered. "I hope she is at liberty at last. Of course I do."

He tried to nerve himself to the effort of demanding the truth from Dr. Koenig. But his feeble store of strength was all but expended, and physical weakness and a curious inability to formulate thought in an unbroken, contiguous stream warned him not to overtax his feeble strength.

"I suppose there is a streak of yellow in me," he mused. "Well, yellow, if light enough, is almost white. I'll have to bleach my soul. That's what."

He did not suspect that the first thoughts of other individuals, like his own, are prone to be ungracious and not wholly fit for drawing-room reception. Nor that yellow is the color of gold as well as the color of brass. And yet the streak of yellow in his nature which was pure unalloyed gold had taught him what was of infinitely more importance—that perpetual vigilance, remorseless self-discipline, truceless self-conquest are necessary in all lives.

He lay shivering in the darkened room. With all his heart he hoped that his mother had been released. He shuddered as he endeavored to picture what the meeting between herself and him would be like, and to his honor be it said, he shivered more on her behalf than on his own. Did her hopes for the deliverance of Russia still center in him? Why should they, since Russia was in a fair way to strike off her shackles by herself? And yet, why shouldn't she? There would be much work to do. Had

not Dr. Koenig spoken of an "epic opportunity"? Had the substance of that thought originated in the old physician's head or in Varvara Alexandrovna's? He thought it tinged with a turbulence from which Dr. Koenig's thoughts usually were free.

His heart began to beat wildly, jarring and shocking his entire body as if a legion of tiny hammers had been set into rhythmic motion and were tapping in the walls of his arteries and veins.

He did not wish to fall ill again, and he strove sedulously to banish all unpleasant thoughts.

He did not succeed very well. His hypersensitive imagination would wander, his thoughts would take wing. They brushed lightly over Yomanato, over Shinto, over Buddhism, over a hundred and one fanciful subjects, and then swooped down and settled dismally, tenderly upon Otto.

But he could never think of Otto very long without becoming self-reproachful. What right had he to be hundreds of miles away from France's battle-fields? Because Germany of the displaced consciousness, Germany, morally insane and spiritually diseased, was the aggressor, the violator, the despoiler, the defeat of the Central Powers was a debt of honor which every right-minded German-American must help to pay. As Otto had pointed out to him on the evening before he had gone to Canada to enlist.

The hammering in his body increased in vehemence, became tumultuous and furious, threatening to burst the blood vessels, to break through the vestments of the flesh.

He thought of the men lying helpless and wounded beyond their own lines, tortured by thirst, tormented by fear of capture, enduring every discomfort of heat and cold, of mire, of splashed blood, of jagged wounds, of blindness, deafness, torn and frayed flesh. And he felt that the terrible scourging which was proceeding within the tissues of his own body was as nought.

During the days that followed Guido strove valiantly to keep unpleasant thoughts at bay. When he essayed to think coherently, or did not resist thoughts that came unbidden, he found that his thoughts, after a very few minutes, seemed to run together like the water circles in a stagnant pool under a dying sun. Then they would be-

come soggy, like ill-baked dough. And mental dyspepsia, yielding the identical discomfort as physical indigestion, would weave before his weary eyes a tangled fabric of fantastic thought groups.

As he grew stronger, he became better able to cope with the thoughts that beset him. Speech still tired him. Besides, he lived in continual horror that Frau Ursula or Dr. Koenig would force upon him a piece of intelligence touching his mother which he was not yet strong enough to bear. He had an insensate, wholly irrational fear that shock or excitement would drive him insane.

When war was finally declared on April Sixth, the circumstance that the proclamation fell upon Good Friday, filled Guido with an amost religious exaltation.

"God's finger in history," he murmured. "It is a token. We have known right along, of course, that if ever a nation was holily in the right in going to war that nation is our own. Still, having our declaration of war fall on a good Friday is a sort of prophecy of fulfillment, a sort of consecration."

Passing strange it was, but all his anger against Germany was now swept away. He merely pitied her—for had not America's declaration of war sealed Germany's doom?

He closed his eyes, and lolled comfortably in his chair and dreamed of the day, now near at hand, when he would fly for France and for England, and for America. **AND FOR DEMOCRACY!** Was he destined to be a successful airman? A great American ace? "If I amount to anything," he mused, "I will, of course, be killed."

The possibility of his own death caused him neither fear nor anxiety. What fear he experienced was not in behalf of himself. He did not fear to die. But he feared to kill. Eagerly as he had desired to go to war, anxiously as he was biding the time when he would be well enough to offer himself to the government as an aviator, he felt a horrible revulsion at the thought of having to kill a human being. The aversion was no longer spiritual. There was something so crassly brutal, so vulgarly uncivilized about it. Still, it had to be done. Better ways there might be for settling disputes between nations than sending forth men to kill other men, but in this instance at least there had been possible no other way of settlement, for there

had been no dispute—there had been invasion and terrorization only.

A feeling of great peace enveloped him, and this feeling of peace acted upon his nerves like a tonic. Strange, he thought, that the circumstance of America's having gone into the war should have engendered in him this feeling of supreme, invincible peace!

He had read that the English boys took to the War as to a sport. He wondered if he would be able to take that view of "potting" human beings, were they thrice enemy. Some fineness in him recoiled from taking so light a view. The English, he knew, felt somewhat contemptuous of Fritz, because Fritz did not regard the war as a sport. Was his German blood telling? He thought it was not that. While America was sure to be sportsmanlike in her method of warfare, he felt sure that her sons would, like himself, consider the thing far too ghastly, far too gravely grim of import to speak of it as a sport.

As he gradually grew stronger, he schooled himself to think of all the unpleasant things that had happened to him. He forced himself to think of the Maxwell-Sheldrake quarrel and to remain calm. He forced himself to think of Varvara Alexandrovna. He forced himself to thoroughly thrash out and recapitulate where he stood with regard to socialism. Convalescence, he thought, was a sort of earthly Devachanic Period in which to digest and assimilate past experiences, thoughts and sentiments.

Of Janet he did not have to force himself to think. Quite the contrary. Struggle as he might, thoughts of her would come. Elschen, representing the obverse side of the medal commemorating that particular incident in his incident-crammed life, he never thought of excepting when she came to see him, which was every other day for a half-hour's visit. He knew by the rigid way in which she held her pretty golden head that she had not forgiven him for abandoning the socialistic cause, and that she disapproved of his intention to enlist as an aviator. As all aviators are doomed to extinction if they only fly long enough and hard enough, he thought the chances were that he would not return from France. That would settle most effectually the difficult position in which his involuntary engagement had involved him. Still he could not

help wishing that he might have been free to tell Janet that he loved her before going off to be killed. Perhaps it was just as well that he couldn't, for, troth plighted, Janet, in case of his death, might have considered herself a widow ere ever she had been a wife and, her heart broken, made of her spinsterhood a living monument to his memory.

All these reflections flitted through his mind one afternoon as he sat in the spacious baywindow playing checkers with Elschen. He was so engrossed by his thoughts, and in consequence blundered so hugely and made such ridiculous moves, that Elschen accused him "of letting her win." He denied the charge, and declared that he was too tired to continue playing.

Frau Ursula had been a silent spectator of this interlude, and after Elschen was gone, she came to Guido and drew up a chair alongside of his.

"Guido, *mein Herzensjunge*," she began, "I have a few things about which I would like to speak to you."

Guido's heart contracted, leapt sky-high and resettled into normal grooves. He was quite sure that Frau Ursula intended to speak to him of Varvara Alexandrovna.

"Well?" he forced himself to ask, in a purely negative tone.

"While you were so ill," Frau Ursula began, strengthening Guido's assumption that "it was coming," "you were delirious part of the time and you talked a lot."

Guido's relief in one direction was counteracted by his dismay in another.

"Did I say anything unusual?" he asked.

"You talked a good deal about Elschen—and Janet."

"Ah!" Guido exclaimed, crimsoning violently.

"Guido, this engagement of yours must not continue."

"Just what did I say?" Guido inquired, frowning.

"You said it was all a mistake, a terrible mistake. You seemed to be talking to Janet."

"Did I tell how the mistake happened?"

"No."

"Well, I don't intend to, either."

"But, my dear boy, if you do not love Elschen it would be wrong to marry her?"

"It would be very much worse to tell her now that I do not love her—to break the engagement and her heart."

"And yourself? Janet?"

Guido became so pale that Frau Ursula was frightened.

"I refuse to discuss this," he said. "I refuse to discuss it now or at any future time. You spoke of several things before," he continued, smoothly. "What were the others?" He braced himself to hear all Frau Ursula undoubtedly had to tell him about Varvara Alexandrovna.

"Well, I have something to tell you which I think will make you happy—unselfishly happy, I mean——"

Guido perceived that, after all, he was not to hear about Varvara Alexandrovna, for Frau Ursula had stopped talking abruptly, and, blushing adorably, looked at him with swimming orbs. Her looks, her manner, the sweet, shy happiness which she seemed to exude helped Guido to surmise the truth.

"Mother, you and father have made it up at last?"

"Father!" she echoed, joyously. "Oh, Guido."

"I'm so glad, *liebes, kleines Mutterchen*."

"Guido, he admits that he behaved shockingly to you the evening you went to see him at the store. He says he owes you an apology——"

"Oh, hang apologies," said Guido. "He and I have treated each other very badly throughout. I don't imagine we will ever be first-rate friends. Although one never can tell. But I vote we let bygones be bygones. I'm ready to be decent to him, and I dare say he'll do the same for me. But apologies—nix!"

"Very well," Frau Ursula said, meekly.

"Mother?"

"Yes, my boy?"

Courage, we have been told, mounteth with occasion. Guido's courage, under the impact of the anticipated shock, had mounted high. It was a pity, he reflected, to let it slide back again without deriving any benefit from the dizzy heights on which it was balancing itself.

"Mother, I want to ask you—Is Varvara Alexandrovna here—in America, in Anasquoit, in this house?"

Frau Ursula's eyes wandered away from Guido's—sure sign that she did not intend to tell him the entire truth.

"Come, *Mutterchen*, out with it. Is she? I want to

know. I might as well tell you I am certain she is here—right here in this very house.”

“No,” said Frau Ursula at last, “she is not here in this house.”

“Then—where?”

“Dr. Koenig took your mother in for the present.”

“When did she arrive?”

“While you were ill. She was among the first prisoners to be released. A large number of Russian political refugees arrived on the same vessel with herself.”

“*Mutterchen*,” Guido’s tone was filled with agony indescribable, “*does she want me?*”

Frau Ursula moistened her lips and essayed to speak. Then, without having said anything, she began to weep gently and silently.

“Mother, nothing but the War shall take me away from you.”

“Guido, after all, you are her son, not mine.”

“Nonsense!” but the boy’s lips were dry.

“Guido, whatever you decide to do, you must not allow yourself to be influenced by any thought of myself.”

He did not reply. A little later, as she sat by his side, he asked her to show him a miniature of Varvara Alexandrovna, which she had in her possession. He had, until that day, categorically declined to receive it or even to look at it.

Frau Ursula went to her room and returned with a small, shagreen-covered case. Holding it against her breast, she said, speaking with considerable agitation:

“I have not been kind. Do not interrupt me. I have not been kind. I should have insisted upon your looking at your mother’s portrait—I should have offered it to you again and again until I had worn down your stubborn pride and foolish opposition. Ever since knowing that you are not my son, you should have looked upon the face represented by this miniature every day. It is something I shall never forgive myself for.”

She handed him the little case and he opened it literally with hands that trembled, for he was still very weak. The face he gazed upon brought to his lips an exclamation of delighted astonishment.

“Why,” he cried, “she is beautiful, beautiful!”

"She was, when I saw her the first time, the most beautiful creature I have ever seen," said Frau Ursula.

"Ah!" the boy exclaimed, too deeply stirred to consider the tactlessness of what he was saying. "No wonder my father loved her."

Frau Ursula did not wince. A beautiful light shown from her face. A time there had been when she had felt envy, and anger, and contempt for Guido's mother; but now every feeling, including admiration for the physical perfection of Varvara Alexandrovna's youth, was merged in a compassion so virile and hardy that it had built itself into a veritable citadel invulnerable to arrows sped by less kindly emotions.

Until late that evening Guido sat with the miniature in his hand, or open before him on the table, studying its every feature. And the more he scrutinized the exquisite ivory, the more deeply he marveled at the utter perfection of the sweet, entrancingly lovely face that looked up at him. Somehow he had never imagined his mother to look like that. His mother! It was the first time he had used the sacred name without prefacing it with "Russian." He reddened as he remembered how for years he had referred to his mother as "the Russian woman."

Thus did beauty, the universal talisman, create in the son of Varvara Alexandrovna a sympathy for his wretched mother which all her self-sacrificing heroism and patriotism, mistaken though it was in method, would never have won for her.

Nor was it merely the sensuous loveliness of the face that looked up at him from the miniature that stirred Guido so profoundly. There was about it an expression of such passionate kindness and purity that it brought to Guido's mind a short poem which Yomanato had written in memory of his own mother.

Thy face was lovely, gracious was thy form,
Thy spirit of transcendent beauty was;
And through the vestments of the flesh it shone
Like to the flame within a temple lamp.

Suddenly he felt a vicarious jealousy for her whom he had all his life called "*Mutterchen*," and who, when the

last is said, occupied in his heart the shrine about which clustered all the unforgettable memories of his strange, shut-in childhood. And a sudden wave of ineffable tenderness for her swept him.

"*Mutterchen*," he said, "dearest *Mutterchen*——"

She looked at him with brimming eyes, and smiled through her tears. She comprehended perfectly that his sudden, irrelevant exclamation was his way of swearing fealty, was his way of telling her that no other woman, were she thrice his real mother, could usurp her place in his heart.

"*Mutterchen*," he said that evening, as she was helping him to get ready for bed, "when shall you arrange to have us meet. You are going to bring her here, are you not?"

Frau Ursula, instead of replying, bent over and kissed him on the brow.

"We will discuss all that to-morrow," she said. "You have had enough excitement for one day."

Frau Ursula's reply gave Guido to think. His understanding of her was so complete that he saw through all her innocent feints and guileless artifices, and usually arrived at a fairly clear perception of what they were intended to hide.

He realized that she was hiding from him something painful connected with Varvara Alexandrovna. The self-discipline which he had been exercising in the interests of a speedy recovery counseled him to refrain from an endeavor to pierce the nature of that painful something. He forced himself, by sheer pressure of will, to go to sleep.

The next day Dobronov came to see him. He had, throughout the entire fortnight of Guido's illness, telephoned every morning and had called twice a week, but until now Guido had not been well enough to discuss the Maxwell-Sheldrake affair with his friend. He told Sergius Ivanovich all about it now, showing him the letters.

Dobronov sympathized with Guido, but was not inclined to discuss the personal aspect of the affair at length. He had already surprised Guido by his unexpectedly vigorous and determined stand in regard to socialism, and he now plead with Guido with an earnestness and an eloquence of which Guido had not deemed him capable. Gone was the amateurish, hectic enthusiasm, alternating with coolly

analytical condemnation with which, heretofore, Sergius Ivanovich had inspected the world's outlay of religious beliefs. He showed an entirely new phase of his character. There was a sturdy manliness in his manner of pleading with Guido in behalf of the cause to which Guido had directed his—Dobronov's—attention, and which he had then deserted, which touched Guido profoundly. It was evident that Dobronov's faith had been enlisted as never before. Socialism stood to him for Religion, not a religion dogma-bound and doctrine-ridden, but religion in the abstract, religion in the concrete, religion absolute and ultimate and unequivocal. He regarded socialism precisely as Guido had regarded it in those exquisite days following his "discovery," days the sweetness and happiness of which lingered in Guido's memory and filled him with a nostalgia so acute that he was sometimes tempted to compromise with his conscience and go back to the socialistic fold. But his habit of conscience forbade the step, so that he bore nostalgia as best he might and remained true to his principles. Dobronov, however, had slipped into the socialistic robes quite naturally, without being aware that he had harnessed and yoked himself to a very complicated and cast-iron faith.

The sight of Dobronov's contentment tore open Guido's not yet cicatrized wound. And yet, in reviewing that chapter of his life, Guido seemed now to perceive that a wide and unbridgable hiatus had existed from the very start between his emotions and his beliefs. He had sought to believe in pacifism and in the economic explanation of history because his heart had clamorously vociferated that socialism, the cause of the exploited and the disinherited, must be the religion of Christ.

The pity of it was that his heart still clung fondly to the faith which his infallibly logical mind had discarded as futile, visionary, impracticable and pernicious.

He steeled himself to meet Dobronov's impassioned pleas.

"No," said Guido, with quiet determination, "I will never go back to socialism." He fell silent. He thought of Varvara Alexandrovna, and it seemed to him that the socialistic arguments which Dobronov was pouring into his ears and which presently it would fall to him to refute,

were a mere prelude to the titanic struggle which, he foresaw, was to take place between himself and the woman who, for the sake of her socialistic convictions, had languished in solitary confinement for twenty years.

In heaven's name—of what avail would his little two-penny arguments be against the indubitable fact of heroism carried to such a pitch of voluntary and deliberate self-immolation?

"Above all, Guido Guidovich," Dobronov concluded, "ask yourself whether your present antagonism to a cause which only a short time ago filled you with such burning zeal was not engendered by the pettiness of these two?" And he tapped his fingers against the letters which Guido had given him to read.

"I have asked myself that question, of course, Sergius Ivanovich," Guido replied. "I think the remarkable attitude which they are taking both as regards myself and pacifism—for they surely did declare for pacifism at the first meeting which we attended—merely accelerated a process which had already begun. I cannot tell you just when the thought first occurred to me that socialism was not the universal panacea. I know I felt the first vague uneasiness the very first evening, when Miss Maxwell pictured what would have happened—as she believed—if Belgium and France had not resisted Germany."

"But I agree with her," Dobronov cried.

"Well, I do not," Guido replied, a little wearily. "At any rate, Sergius Ivanovich, I feel that I can never change back."

"You are very young, you know," Dobronov said, critically.

"I am decades older than before I fell ill," said Guido.

And so he was. Currents of thought and counter-currents, reflections, experiences and thoughts which, if they occur at all, occur in most lives in a diluted and distributed form throughout a period covering the better part of a life-time, had, by the vicissitudes of the era in which his adolescence and early manhood fell, been crowded into a few brief years of Guido's life. The mental strain had almost wrecked his none too vigorous health; will-power was helping him to recover, but he felt, with a singular sensation of having lost something which he had never

possessed, that the first bloom of his youth had been rubbed away, and that no power in heaven or earth would be able to restore it to him.

The day after Dobronov's visit, after returning from his second short walk, he asked Frau Ursula to tell him frankly what she was withholding in regard to Varvara Alexandrovna.

"I am prepared for anything," he said. "I am prepared even to have you tell me that she has lost her reason."

"It is not as bad as that," said Frau Ursula. "No, decidedly, it is not as bad as that." She became quite cheerful, but suddenly her spirits slumped again.

"You realize, of course, that she has had a terrible time of it," Frau Ursula said. "The imagination balks at conceiving what twenty years of solitary confinement in a semi-dark cell must mean. That she came through it without losing her sanity or being entirely enfeebled in health speaks volumes for her mental fortitude and physical vigor."

"Not entirely enfeebled—" Guido plucked the phrase from the sentence in which it lay imbedded. "Then she is enfeebled. In what way?"

"She is at times almost crippled with rheumatism."

"What else?"

"She suffers from a disease, known as agoraphobia—the fear of open spaces. She is not suffering from it in a severe form, and Dr. Koenig hopes it will pass in a few weeks. We have not been able to persuade her to take a walk excepting in the back yard, or to take a drive, excepting in a closed vehicle. It is very pitiful. At first she was afraid to walk even in the back yard because it was uncovered, and it took all of Dr. Koenig's persuasiveness to convince her that there was no risk. But she refused resolutely to do so unless accompanied by Dr. Koenig and Gretchen or myself—one on either side of her. Then she felt comparatively safe."

Guido stared at Frau Ursula with eyes dilated with horror. She had told him "not as bad as that," in reply to his question asking whether his mother had lost her reason. But was this strange and mysterious disease—agoraphobia—really "not as bad" as outright insanity? To be afraid of field and forest, with all the magic lure of

out-door things, to be afraid of silver-tongued brook and distant mountain peak, to be afraid, last of all, worst of all, of God's blue sky, with fleeting cloud and riot of blue and white, emblems both of purity—how ghastly, how unspeakably ghastly a thing was that?

A feeling such as he had never experienced before came over Guido—a feeling that to wreak vengeance the most cruel upon men who connived in even the feeblest way to bring such disaster to a human soul, would be a sort of joy, a sort of religious rite. He felt that he could have used dagger or bomb, he could have tortured, yes and poisoned too, to avenge such a crowning affront to the Divine Essence that dwells in all. But did it dwell in all? Did it? Could anyone, by any stretch of the imagination, bring himself to see in human beings so destitute of compassion as these, vessels in which even the tiniest spark of the Divine Light might inhabit?

He pulled himself together. He shuddered at the abyss which he had uncovered in himself. Revenge, no matter how sublimely inspired, he, in his youthful arrogance of judgment, had held to be a sinister and evil thing. But the black pit in his own soul into which he had just gazed with such wild yearnings for accomplishment, had at least this salutary effect. He understood what he had never understood before—how Varvara Alexandrovna and a host of other victims of the Russian autocracy had been wrought to such a pitch of indignation by the brutality of the Russian system that, righteous indignation curdling into a curious compound of vengeful lust, punitive desire and chimerical hopes of accomplishing some good by terrorism, they had resorted to those methods which they knew must make Siberia their ultimate goal.

Frau Ursula, who knew Guido almost as well as Guido knew her, waited in silence until he was through with his reverie.

"Is there anything else?" he asked, suddenly.

Frau Ursula bent her head low over her work.

"Avoiding my eyes," Guido thought. He knew it for a bad sign.

"What else is there, *Mutterchen*?" he asked, changing the form of his question.

"Your mother has, of course, grown very much older. She does not look very much like the miniature now."

"Yes, of course, that is only natural," said Guido.

Frau Ursula looked at him sharply.

"She is very much changed, Guido," she said, simply.

Guido asked no more. He understood perfectly that Frau Ursula had said what she had said because she wished to prevent him from showing horror or disgust at sight of his mother. He perceived this as clearly as he perceived that she did not wish to continue the conversation. He asked no more questions, save only one.

"Don't you think we could drive down to Dr. Koenig's to-morrow—she will be waiting eagerly to see me."

"If you wish it, certainly."

Accordingly, the day being fair, Frau Ursula and Guido, after announcing themselves by telephone, drove down to Dr. Koenig's large, old-fashioned, rambling mansion in the unfashionable part of Bismarck Street. Neither spoke. Both labored under a sense of almost insufferable oppression.

As the automobile stopped in front of Dr. Koenig's door, Frau Ursula said:

"I think, Guido, I will let you go in to your mother alone."

"No, *Mutterchen!* Do not desert me."

"Guido!"

The exclamation was sharp, pricking, indignant. It shamed him, for it was an accusation of cowardice. It braced him, because he could not endure to be thought a coward.

"You are not going to break down, are you?" she demanded.

"No."

"If you feel the least misgivings as to your physical strength, we had better drive straight home again. It won't do to have you break down. On your mother's account quite as much as on your own."

"I won't break down, of course not," he said.

His brave words were merest braggadocio. He felt like a very small and badly frightened child. He experienced the most absurd desires. He longed, literally, to cling to Frau Ursula's hand, to hide his head against her bosom

or in her skirt. As he walked up the brown-stone stoop he felt as if he were being led to his execution.

They were in the house at last—in front of Varvara Alexandrovna's closed door. Frau Ursula knocked softly and then entered.

"Guido has come," she said, in German, standing on the threshold.

"Let him come in," Varvara Alexandrovna replied. "I have waited twenty years to see him: It is a long time to wait for one's only son."

Her voice held a singular quality. It was low, and its low pitch gave the impression not of modulation but of physical emaciation. It seemed to unloose a specter of the immense, inconceivable silence of the living tomb in which its owner had lived for two decades. It had a soft, haunting quality, as of stillness made audible.

Frau Ursula stepped back into the hall, and motioned to Guido to go into the room. The boy was white as death. "What shall I say to her?" he thought. "What shall I say?" He did not move. Frau Ursula grasped his arm and shook him roughly. He nodded to her, and smiled a smile which was meant to show courage. An awful physical sickness had come over him. Frau Ursula gave him a terrible look, a look that said as plainly as words, "If you break down now you will disgrace *me*, who brought you up. Remember that."

He shook off the paralysis which was numbing his entire body, and strode forward and into the room. Frau Ursula closed the door behind him. For a moment the room whirled about his head, and he could see nothing. Then his vertigo cleared.

What had he been afraid of? His fear had been indefinite and unspecific, but he knew now, in a flash of blinding insight, that he had been afraid of meeting tragedy in quintessence, tragedy disrobed of the trappings of purple and gold, of the equipage of tattered ermine and faded rose-petals. He had been afraid of meeting tragedy ghoulish, hideous and naked; tragedy, brutal and stark.

This was the piercing first impression which Varvara Alexandrovna made upon him. Only gradually did he perceive the details that went to the making of this living picture of tragedy incarnate.

Varvara Alexandrovna was standing in the middle of the room, a small, shrunken, bent little woman, looking pathetically feeble and broken and—Guido writhed as he concluded the impression which she made—horribly, pathetically poor. Her dress was made of a plain, dusty-looking, black serge. It lacked trimmings of every description. She did not even wear the customary white collars and cuffs.

Her snow-white hair was drawn back from her forehead in the plainest way possible, and her face was white, horribly, grotesquely white, almost as if it had been chalked, and there hung over it a bluish penumbra. And as if some malignant power, jealous of her erstwhile beauty, had determined to make her as repulsive as possible, her face and hands were pitted with small-pox.

The only recognizable feature were her eyes, as in the miniature, they were dark, luminous, with all their spiritual fire unimpaired.

Mother and son stood and looked at each other, looked and looked and looked. And the more the son looked, the more the indescribable horror of the mother's life took possession of his imagination. Now the physical tortures and indignities which she had undergone loomed largest. Then the twenty years' unbroken solitude came uppermost, and shook his soul with a mental ague. The passion of pity which took possession of him was stronger than any other emotion he had ever known.

The terrible fire of compassion which was burning in him opened his eyes to the true nature of the tragedy that had engulfed Varvara Alexandrovna. Physically she had been despoiled, broken, degraded, but the splendid soul had retained all its unabated vigor and enthusiasm and kindness. It was excoriating to think what that regal and saintly soul might have achieved under ordinary fighting conditions.

What were all the martyrdoms of all the saints compared to the unearthly ordeal which this woman had endured? Torture, death at the stake, at worst a few hours of torment; but her fate had been far more cruel.

The gradual crushing monotony which had been meant to crush her, had not crushed her. They had meant to tear her heart out of her body and the courage out of her

soul, by heaping upon her day after day the shocking weight of mental and spiritual nothingness, but they had not succeeded. All they had succeeded in doing was to make her unlovely to the eye, and to intensify her humanity a hundredfold.

Nor did she wear her martyrdom like a halo. Of grandeur there was nothing about her. But the tragedy which wrapped her round was rendered all the more heart-breaking by her humanity, which nothing had been able to quench or to destroy, which had flourished, grown, become luxuriant under the most inhuman and dehumanizing conditions.

Guido was still very weak from his recent illness, and he burst into tears. He had a curious habit when intensely stirred. He, who never prayed, who—though he had never confessed it to any living soul—saw in prayer an element of irreverence, was in the habit, when in the grasp of some merciless emotion, to fall upon his knees. All unconsciously he did so now. Still weeping, he fell upon his knees at his mother's side.

"My son," said the phantom-like voice, "do not weep. My long agony is over. Rejoice with me that freedom has come at last and with it an opportunity to serve others."

"*Mamotschka*," sobbed Guido, "what have they made of you? They have stolen your life from you."

"Not so," said the sweet, frail voice. "My life has been enriched and ennobled by my suffering. I have much to be thankful for. I have been given back my work while still in my prime, my purpose strengthened, my will fortified by my long imprisonment." Her voice was like a bell coming across a mist-drenched sea. It was as soothing as a lullaby.

"Ah, my son," Varvara Alexandrovna continued, "those who dwell in freedom and in light, who are at liberty to speak whenever and to whomsoever they wish, and who abuse this privilege by quarreling, by saying unkind things, by discussing trivial and unworthy things, can have no conception of the self-discipline required to sustain solitary confinement throughout—how long did they tell me I had been imprisoned?"

"Twenty years," Guido said, in a hollow voice.

"Come, my son, rise, and sit here beside me, where I

can see you. Dry your tears and reserve them for those who are unhappier than myself."

Guido rose from his knees.

"I am ashamed of my weakness," he said.

"Do not be ashamed," said the gentle voice. "Shall I tell you what you have done for me? You have bestowed upon me the most delicate and at the same time the most violent happiness which I have known for years, when, just now, you burst into tears so spontaneously. How selfish is the human heart! I speak of having practiced self-discipline. And yet the grief of my son for the dull torment which I have endured has made me exquisitely happy. So do not blame yourself for weeping."

"Would that my tears had the power to wipe away the memory of your 'dull torment,'" said Guido.

"I would not have it wiped away," said Varvara Alexandrovna. Her voice, like a voice in a dream, spoke without inflection. Almost it seemed as if long abstinence from speech had robbed her of the ability to stress and emphasize her words as all do quite unconsciously in ordinary talk, so that her sentences came as a monotone, as if she had been deaf, excepting that her voice, being sweet and melodious, lacked the flatness of those who cannot hear themselves speak.

"I would not have those years wiped away," Varvara Alexandrovna repeated. "They taught me, ah! so much. It was not as bad as it must seem to you, for in imagination we add lurid touches of which there is a dearth in real life."

"I have read enough and heard enough of Darkest Russia," Guido rejoined, "to know that the most full-blooded imagination must stumble and become blind and halt, if it attempts to paint the horrors that await the political exile."

Varvara Alexandrovna regarded her son thoughtfully.

"It is possible," she said, gently, "that I was fortunate in having mental resources to draw upon which, if I may say so, others may have lacked. First of all, to my excellent mother I owed an unusual knowledge of the Scriptures. I knew the entire New Testament almost by heart so that, in the long hours when it was too dark to read in my cell, I derived a comfort which passeth human under-

standing from reciting to myself, sometimes in silence and sometimes aloud, my favorite passages of the Gospels. And not only my favorite passages. I had been fortunate enough to retain possession of my small pocket Testament. And when it was light enough to read, I set myself the task of getting the passages I still lacked by heart, so that, if for some reason I should be deprived of my Testament, its entire treasure would be safely stored away where no earthly power could rob me of it."

"And do you actually know the entire New Testament by heart?" Guido exclaimed, incredulously.

"I had ample time to rehearse it over and over again, my son," Varvara Alexandrovna replied, smiling, and with more animation than she had yet shown. "Then there were the classics. I had a horror of forgetting what I knew about the great masters of literature, so, turn and turn about, I rehearsed the passages I knew by heart from Shakespeare, Molière, Goethe, Tolstoy.

"And I had the Cause. And prayer, I prayed sometimes for hours at a time. My son, have they taught you how to pray?"

Guido was considerably taken aback by the question.

"It was, I thought, your wish that I should be brought up without—" Guido hesitated over the words which he had ridiculed so often that they had come to seem nothing but a sorry jest—"without bias of any sort," he concluded, a little shamefacedly.

"True; I did not wish you to think the religious anchor was bound up in any one creed. But I did not inhibit prayer. My wish was misunderstood. It does not matter in the least. You are good and pure. And it may be possible that you have prayed without knowing it. Know, Guido Guidovich, there are many ways of praying. It is not necessary to grovel in the dust before an ikon or a saint's collar-bone—it is not even necessary to picturesquely fold one's hands; but it is necessary to reach out with all one's might and all one's strength and all one's soul after that which some call God, and some call Christ, and some call the Holy Ghost, and some call the Trinity."

"And words? Are words necessary?" Guido asked, his voice eager with interest.

"Words?" Varvara Alexandrovna did not seem to un-

derstand his question at once. "Formal words, words prescribed by ritual, are not necessary."

"I did not mean that," Guido rejoined, slowly. "I mean, in praying, is it necessary to address yourself to someone—to God—or to Christ?"

Varvara Alexandrovna regarded her son curiously with her large luminous eyes. She did not exclaim, as Dobronov would have done, "What curious things you say," nor did she answer evasively, as Yomanato would have done. She said, very simply:

"Odd that he should have happened just upon this point so quickly. No, Guido Guidovich, it is not necessary to address yourself to Divinity in praying. I endeavor rather by reflection, by a spiritual striving, so to arrange my spiritual being that it may be in harmony with the Supreme Absolute—so far as my poor human understanding can dare to imagine what being in harmony with the Supreme Absolute means."

"If that is what you mean by prayer," said Guido, "I have prayed often and long." How remarkable it was that this mother of his, who was to him an utter stranger, should understand his mood so completely.

"My son!" For the first time Varvara Alexandrovna reached out her hand to Guido. Even now she did not touch his hand, but laid her own delicately upon his sleeve, as if she realized how loathsome her flesh with its unwholesome bluish tinge must be to others. Guido glanced down upon her hand which, since she had done no manual labor of any sort, was slender and small as a young girl's. Her sleeve had slipped back, revealing a broad red band which ran clean around her wrist, and which shone from the dead milk white of the rest of her skin like blood upon snow.

"What did they do to you?" Guido demanded. "What made that scar?"

"See," she showed him the other wrist, "there is its twin. No," she continued, smiling brightly, "they did not brand me with hot hirones, as you seem to think by the expression in your face. They merely manacled me. Do not take it so to heart. It is all over."

"Oh, God!" said Guido. He rose and walked through the room once or twice. "Were they too tight?"

"Not when they were forged on. But I am afraid I behaved rather badly—I tore at them, trying vainly, of course, to drag my hands apart. And the next day, and the day after that, and all through the nights that intervened, as we jolted along in a springless cart at the bottom of which I lay, over roads than which there are no worse in the world, my hands jerked this way and that. And rheumatism set in and my wrists swelled. They had to file off the handcuffs in the village to which we came. But since that day, when the weather changes, or it is very cold, or I become excited, the marks turn blood-red."

"Why did they handcuff you?" Guido demanded.

"Why speak of unpleasant things, my son?" Varvara Alexandrovna parried, still in her sweet, monotonous, lifeless voice. "All that is past is past. Let the dead past bury its dead."

"But I want to know," said Guido doggedly. "It was devilish! To handcuff a woman, a woman of education like yourself."

Varvara Alexandrovna looked very grave.

"I did not wish to mar this first beautiful hour by speaking of these dreadful things," she said. "But sooner or later you must know all about them. So I may as well tell you now. In one small town where we stopped for the night, while they were taking me to Siberia from where your father, as you know, rescued me, there was a party of women who were being taken to Saghalien, an island more terrible than any leper colony. They take to this island only such women who are young enough still to bear children and hardy enough to endure the terrible rigors of the climate. Upon arrival, each woman is handed over to some man who becomes her master. Nor is that all. Every night, while they are on their way to the port of embarkation, the room where these unfortunate women are lodged is turned into a public brothel, where all guards, soldiers, bureaucrats and underlings are at liberty to satisfy their lust."

Guido did not reply. Stark horror was painted in his eyes.

"On hearing the cries of these women, and being informed by a grinning guard what was causing them, I became as one demented. The man warned me to be silent."

But I was beside myself. A second guard, less good-humored than the first, was attracted by my outcry, and reported me to the governor of the prison. The governor came in person to see the fetters placed upon my wrists. He told me that I deserved to be taken away from my party and to be handed over to the Saghalien "colonists," and the only thing that prevented him from doing this, he concluded, was that I was a Vasalov and therefore a distant kinswoman of the Czar. It would, of course, be sacrilege to so degrade anyone in whose veins flowed one drop of Romanov blood."

"The brutes," said Guido. "The brutes."

"Let us forget these unlovely things for a little while," Varvara Alexandrovna continued. "I did not dare to think of them overmuch while in prison, or they would have driven me mad. I thought of them only to keep before my eyes the holiness of the Cause, to which I consecrated myself anew every night and every morning."

"And did you never regret having sacrificed so much for the Cause?" Guido asked.

"No sacrifice is too great for the Cause—for any cause that seems to men good and holy. Remember that, my son. Remember it always. Human happiness, if resting upon pure foundations, is a beautiful and good thing. But there is something far more beautiful and that is to live in accordance with the nature of the Holy Ghost, as we conceive it to be. That is the greatest, the most beautiful thing in the world. For to do so means that we feel perfect love for our kind, and love is God and God is love. There is nothing finer on earth."

"*Mamotschka*," said Guido, "it is curious. These thoughts that you have translated into life, have come to me often, often. But I have not lived them."

"You will live them, my son!" Varvara Alexandrovna said, proudly. And at the moment a strange sense of exultation and pride in being thus mothered leapt in Guido's veins. The chivalrous loyalty which he felt for Frau Ursula made him repress the feeling as soon as he became conscious of it.

"The first year at Schlusselfburg was the hardest," Varvara Alexandrovna continued. "I was desperately lonely, and I feared seriously for my reason. Siberia had been

bad enough. But this was infinitely worse. In Siberia there had at least been human beings to talk to, and human beings, no matter how unlettered and uncultivated, are human beings. I longed for the enormous expanses of snow-covered ground which had in former years seemed so oppressive to me. I longed for the clean smell of the snow, for the homely little Yurta, a hut built of rough logs, the chinks filled in with turf and mud, in which I had lived in Turukhansk, and where, during the long nights, I had enjoyed the luxury of a candle.

"At the end of my first year, a new batch of prisoners was brought to Schlusselfburg. One of these new prisoners was placed in the cell next to mine. At last I had someone to talk to."

"To talk to?"

"By rapping out an alphabetical code against the wall."

"Oh, yes," said Guido.

"My neighbor, a young student by the name of Vladimir Nicolaevich Topotopov, was an extraordinary character, and although I have never seen him—he died a year ago in Siberia—I know him better than any other human being, excepting myself."

She fell into a reverie. Guido saw that there were interbound with her memories of Topotopov other memories which touched her keenly.

Presently she resumed.

"Topotopov was, I think, one of the most heroic souls that ever lived. As he was arrested on an 'administrative order,' that is, as he was merely a suspect and received no regular trial, he would normally have received a far more lenient sentence than was involved in being condemned to Schlusselfburg, especially as he had powerful political friends. Instead of using this influence to secure a comparatively easy captivity, he used it to be sent to Schlusselfburg so as to be able to get in touch with myself."

Again Varvara Alexandrovna paused.

"There never was a man who had greater faith," she resumed. "Although he was an atheist, and disavowed faith in God along with belief in Christ, his faith in God survived—but he did not know it. For what was it but faith in the divine that made him certain that he would be able to get into communication with me, once he had reached

Schlusselfburg. The influence of his political friends did not reach that far, or, if it had, they would not have dared to intercede in Topotopov's behalf to the extent of asking that he be placed in a cell next to mine. Nor did Topotopov hope for anything as auspicious as that. He had hoped that, at best, in a roundabout way, through the agency of connecting cells and their inmates, he would be able to establish communication with me.

"That was his purpose in getting himself sent to Schlusselfburg.

"As good fortune would have it, he was put into the cell next to mine. He opened conversation at once—and oh!—how insanely happy I was when I heard the first rappings against the wall that told me I had someone to speak to."

Guido caught his breath sharply. "Insanely happy"—in an ill-ventilated, unhygienic cell, which lacked every comfort and decency of civilized life! "Insanely happy!"

"He introduced himself and told me why he had come, and his joy on learning that the woman with whom he was seeking to communicate was in the cell directly next to his, was as great as my own in having a neighbor.

"His purpose in coming was to deliver a message from the outside world which would enable me to send messages in return—messages touching the Cause.

"You see, all letters, both incoming and outgoing, were of course strictly censored, so that, although I was permitted to send letters to friends several times a year, I was not able to receive or send any information touching the Cause.

"Now Topotopov had an exaggerated faith in myself and my ability. That is why he had worked out a code so simple that a school-boy might have applied it. It consisted in lightly shading the letters which were to figure in the cipher, leaving all the others unshaded. By using this simple code I was able to send words of good cheer to my comrades, and occasionally, to give them advice.

"As I said before, Topotopov had a greatly exaggerated notion of my ability. But his devotion to the Cause and his belief in myself bestowed the unutterable boon upon me of being able to keep in real and not merely in nominal touch with the outside world. It helped me to keep my

sanity. It gave me a sense of being of use to my comrades although I was lodged behind prison walls.

"After a year Topotopov was removed. Fifteen years later he came back, and was put into the same cell as before, and we renewed our acquaintance. He remained for three years. Then he was sent to Siberia, where he died last year as a result of exposure following his long confinement."

"Long confinement," Guido exclaimed. "And yours was even longer than his."

"The Good Father gave me remarkable physical strength," Varvara Alexandrovna replied, "and a cheerful disposition. I have a faculty for seeing things in the rosiest light. Excepting the suffering of the peasants," she added.

"Sometimes," she continued, "I admit that the solitude of my cell ate like a corrosive into my being. Shall I tell you what I did then? I played at being a hermit who had voluntarily forsaken the world and renounced all social intercourse. And I pictured his misery when ill, when food ran short and he was threatened with starvation. I, at least, although the prison fare was coarse and unpalatable, had always enough to eat, and in case of illness I could count upon some sort of medical attention. So the thought that others had voluntarily inflicted upon themselves worse privations than I was suffering, made me quite contented and satisfied with the fate which had befallen me, a fate which I had invited, which I knew awaited me when I first espoused the Cause."

A number of times, while talking, Varvara Alexandrovna had paused for a second or two to glance hastily around the room with a look of alarm which contrasted strangely with the naive dignity of her usual manner.

Now, quite abruptly, she laid her hand with a spasmodic gesture upon Guido's sleeve. Even in her excitement she avoided touching his hand.

"My son," she said, "is there anyone behind me?"

Involuntarily Guido looked. Then he remembered.

"No, no, *Mamotschka*," he said, assuringly, "we are entirely alone."

"Of course, how foolish I am." Varvara Alexandrovna frowned a little, as if displeased with herself. "I cannot

get rid of this fear that someone has gained access to the room and is watching me."

"The only door to the room is closed," said Guido, quietly, "and you are facing it."

"Yes, but there are two windows, and I cannot face the door and the windows at the same time. I can only face the door and one window, or both windows. In the Russian prisons, there is a small barred window in the door through which the guard, in walking up and down the corridor, can look and does look. And I cannot banish the feeling that someone is not merely looking at me through one of the windows, but is biding his chance to creep stealthily into the room."

"But there is no one in the house who would do such a thing," Guido assured her. "Besides, you are on the third floor—far too high from the street for anyone to climb in."

"Yes, that is what Dr. Koenig tells me. I am trying to be brave. I am on free soil. I am among friends. Dr. Koenig tells me this fear is a sickness—he tells me I will get entirely over it in a little while if I try to fight the feeling of fear. And I am fighting it now," she added, pathetically.

Guido, desirous of distracting her attention, said:

"It was through Topotopov's cipher, I suppose, that you were enabled to help direct the movements of your party?"

"How do you know that I did that? Ah, through Dmitri Stepanovich." She stopped, and smiled kindly at Guido who had reddened at mention of Vasalov's name, bringing with it, as it did, a host of unwelcome recollections.

Varvara Alexandrovna did not misinterpret that blush.

"You refused to heed the summons I sent you through our kinsman," she said, very gently. "It is nothing. You, born and bred on free soil, cannot understand. I say you cannot understand and yet I hope to make you understand. But we will not speak of political matters to-day. For one brief hour I wish to be a human being like other human beings, wrapped up entirely in my own flesh and blood, as if there were no suffering in the world, and no poor down-trodden human beasts of burden whose sufferings and wrongs cry for redress with a thousand tongues."

"Poor *Mamotschka*," said Guido. "Can you not, after all you've been through, reconcile yourself to being a mere 'human being like other human beings'? You have contributed enough of your strength and your soul to the Cause. The Revolution is an accomplished fact. Remain here with us, with my mother and myself." He stopped in sudden confusion, looking red and uncomfortable, and wondering whether he had given umbrage by referring to Frau Ursula as "my mother" and by identifying himself with her so completely.

Varvara Alexandrovna flashed at him her sweet, bright smile.

"You blush as easily as a girl, my son," she said, a subtle insinuation in her manner that this fact pleased her. "Facile blushing, my mother, your *Babutschka*, used to say, betokens a sensitive conscience or unhealthy self-consciousness. You are not in the least self-conscious, so it must be that your conscience is delicately attuned. I am heartily glad of that."

"If it were not," Guido replied, chivalrously, "it would be strange, seeing who my mother and my father were, and who my foster-mother."

"Your foster-mother!—nay, Guido Guidovich, call her your mother, as you did before, when you blushed so charmingly. I have small claim upon you. I wonder you do not hate me."

Guido lowered his eyes. Did she guess that he had hated her once? How long ago that seemed! Not long enough, however, to have dulled the recollection of the unholy feelings with which the thought of "the Russian woman" had been wont to inspire him. That recollection must forever remain a sensitive spot in his mind, a thing to bleed afresh whenever one of the manifold strands of memory brushed against it.

"Why should I hate you?" he murmured, confusedly.

"For taking you back to Russia as an infant, for risking the very thing that happened." In the stress of her retrospective emotion her voice for the first time broke away from its gray monotone. "Ah! that was the most cruel thing I ever endured, to see the babe at my breast covered with vermin, nibbled at by rats, and growing thinner and thinner every day."

"Don't think of it," said Guido, hastily. "It is too horrible to think about."

"You do not hate me for it?"

"How could I hate you for that!" Guido exclaimed. He was thankful that he could honestly disavow the suggestion, since his hatred and contempt for Varvara Alexandrovna had sprung from her revolutionary activity. It had never occurred to him to blame her for the physical sufferings which he had endured during the first twelve years of his life.

"You are generous," said Varvara Alexandrovna. "Do you know, Guido Guidovich, that thought tortured me during my long captivity. I could not rid myself of the thought that when they told you—you would hate me. During the last years at Schlüsselburg the thought became almost an obsession. And when no word came from you, after I had sent my message to our kinsman that I earnestly desired your presence in Russia—a message which had been received and delivered by him as I knew by his confirmation, I became very unhappy. I thought, 'My only son hates me. He hates me because it is my fault that he suffered cruelly through ten long years of his childhood.'"

"I did not suffer as much as you think," said Guido. "Or, rather, I suffered, but in spite of my suffering I was happy. Nor did it ever occur to me to blame you for that suffering."

"It makes me very happy to hear you say so," said Varvara Alexandrovna. "At first, after receiving Dmitri Stepanovich's acknowledgment of my request to communicate with you, I indulged in such foolish hopes. I amused myself by constructing letters such as I imagined you would write me. I imagined a letter written in Russian, with pathetic little errors in spelling and in grammar, showing that you considered this first letter from son to mother to be far too sacred to be submitted to your Russian tutor for correction. I imagined—" she broke off and then resumed, "I imagined such foolish things. I thought you would tell me how you pitied me, and how, at the same time you applauded me. I thought you would tell me that you loved me very dearly, that you loved your *Mamotschka* almost as much as your *Mutterchen*. Not quite as much. That could not be. I was not jealous of Ursula von

Wendt. How could I be? She had saddled herself with my babe. I felt the keenest gratitude and love for her. I should have been disappointed in my son, if, after all the love and benefits received from this woman, who to me will always stand for the incarnation of the Christian spirit, he could have found it in his heart to transfer his filial allegiance from her to me. She must always be first in your heart. All I ask is your second-best love. And that was what I hoped for—that you would write to tell me that there was room in your heart for me, also, little as I deserved it. I thought you would tell me that you prayed every evening to God to sustain me in my terrible ordeal; that you kissed my miniature upon rising and retiring. Such foolish, silly, romantic little things did your *Mamotschka* imagine."

"Don't," Guido cried. "Don't. I cannot stand it. I was a beast not to write to you."

"I have hurt you." Varvara Alexandrovna laid her hand gently against her son's sleeve. "I did not mean to hurt you, my son. Did you think that I was reproaching you? Far from it. But these are foolish, futile, selfish little thoughts of which I cannot speak to any stranger, no matter how kind. Let me feel, Guido Guidovich, that I can open my heart entirely and without reservations to you, my son. And know, that not for one moment have I blamed you in the past for your silence, nor shall I blame you in the future, if, after having tried to win you for the Cause, you should say me nay."

Guido choked back the tears that were rising. Could he ever forgive himself for not writing his mother as Vasalov and Frau Ursula had wished him to do? He remembered Frau Ursula's repeated solicitations and his angry rebuffs. His remorse was terrible. It swept through him like a tangible force, like an electric or a galvanic current mysteriously charged with some malignant and disintegrating force. He had a momentary sensation of hurtling off the edge of the world into madness.

He felt ill and shaken. A sort of nausea took possession of him. He rose and went to the window, fighting for self-control.

Varvara Alexandrovna followed him. Standing beside him, she reached only a little above his shoulder, and he

was not overall. She laid her slender hand, still so shapely and beautiful in contour, so hideous in its disfiguration by small-pox marks and the blue tinge which Guido was at loss to explain—against his arm. Always, always she avoided touching his flesh with her own. Was she waiting for him to show her in some way that she was not loathsome to him?

"I have made you angry?" she inquired, gently.

"Angry?" He wheeled about swiftly and took her into his arms. Drawing her close to his heart, he looked down into his mother's face, so hideous physically, so wonderfully beautiful in its spiritual expression.

She pressed her head against his shoulder, and a look of supreme beatitude came into her face. She closed her eyes, and he felt the thin fingers clutch spasmodically at his shoulder. She clung to him thus, in silence, eyes closed, giving the impression of wishing to arrest the vanishing moments.

Now that her face was so close to his he could see with microscopic vividness how unhealthy was her flesh. Suddenly the truth dawned on him. She had had scurvy, the disease of malnutrition. Nor was that all. Her hair, her skin, her finger-nails, all pointed to an unbelievable dearth of care throughout many years, to a lack of all the innocent appurtenances to a woman's toilet, ranging from little luxuries like cold cream for chapped skin and talcum powder for chafed skin to downright necessities, like the daily bath, all of which go so far toward preserving not merely a woman's comeliness, but her physical and mental vigor as well.

Suddenly, like a wraith, the face of the miniature, so entrancingly lovely in the witchery of unblemished youth, seemed to rise beside the cruelly marred features of the woman that was. He had a swift, harrowing vision of the acute pain that must have swept over his mother when, upon her release, she had looked upon her image in a mirror for the first time in twenty years, and had seen the flawless, noble beauty of her radiant young womanhood despoiled, ravaged, shriveled into squalid repulsiveness.

He felt sick unto death. A knife seemed to be turning in his entrails. Proper nourishment, the decency of the daily ablution, every physical and spiritual comfort had

been denied his mother; and he had not even written her; he had withheld from her the poor comfort of an occasional letter, the meager solace which any human being would give another out of mere charity; he, who was her son, who should have made her deliverance his life-work, had ignored her more completely than, in sooth, he would have ignored any human creature suffering a similar fate of whom he had known.

What a knave he was! What a brute! He was infinitely worse than the jailers and the guards whom he held so despicable because they had not enough moral stamina to resist an iniquitous system. He condemned himself utterly. He longed for chastisement. His frenzy of self-accusation and self-reproach was so great that he could have found it in his heart to whip himself, like a flagellant.

And all the while that he was frantically condemning himself, the physical repugnance with which his mother inspired him, persisted. He told himself that he must overcome it. If he did not kiss her now, and caress the poor, bluish face and hands, he would sink to the lowest of moral levels. He thought of St. Francis—how his love for his kind and for God had been so great that he had gone forth to meet the lepers, kissing their open sores as a token of his humility and love. And he thought of the Easter kiss of the Russian Church—that strange custom which on Easter Sunday leads the worshipers after service to bestow upon each other without discrimination of sex, age or station a kiss whose purpose is to symbolize the common humanity and common frailty of all.

Varvara Alexandrovna opened her eyes. Still clinging to Guido, she said, in her sweet, weird voice:

"So happy am I, so happy, my handsome son! Foolish and unworthy little things have worried me since my release. I have become so hideous, so unlike myself, so unlike any other human creature that I thought, 'When my boy sees me, he will shrink from me, he will cry out that I am not his mother, he will deny me utterly.' How wicked I was to think so meanly of you. Instead of denying me, you have knelt to me; instead of proffering me black hate, love, white as a dove from heaven, have you given me as my portion; instead of repudiating me, you have embraced me. Into your arms you have taken me,

you have laid my head against your heart, you have looked deep into my eyes. My unbeautiful body has not mattered to you; into my soul you have looked, and because your own soul and heart are undefiled, you have had the strength to say to yourself that the spoiled and mutilated temple matters not one jot or tittle so long as the holy of holies—the spirit—remains intact and unimpaired.”

Tears streamed down the boy's face. All the cruel repugnance which he had felt was swept away.

“*Mamotschka*,” he whispered, “*Mamotschka*,” and he stooped and kissed her cheek.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE realization that she and Hauser, since they had been divorced, would have to be remarried, was something of a shock to Frau Ursula. It was, she thought, a little embarrassing. Hauser made light of it, and so did Guido. Frau Ursula, anticipating some sort of friction, if only the friction of habit between these two, was amazed by the affable and almost cordial manner with which it was now their custom to greet each other, and by the placid and entirely unperfunctory way in which she frequently found them conversing upon coming unexpectedly into the room.

Varvara Alexandrovna was now a member of Frau Ursula's household. Her agoraphobia was gradually wearing off. Guido's way with her was the last word in gentleness and filial thoughtfulness. Frau Ursula, at first delighted with Guido's behavior, presently suffered a relapse of maternal jealousy. It was short-lived, however. She was too innately good a woman to allow herself to fall under the baleful spell of so reprehensible a sentiment.

Guido, by cumulative suasion, had succeeded in getting Varvara Alexandrovna to submit to successive strategies whose purpose was to rid her of her fear of open spaces. First he persuaded her to keep the door open, she facing it, when he was in the room with her, then with her back turned to it, while he was with her. To compass that much was comparatively easy, for she had evolved an unbounded esteem and confidence in her boy—but the real torment of her psychic rehabilitation began when Guido tried to persuade her to leave her door open when she was entirely alone. Her attempts to avoid doing this were pitiable. She tried to buy herself off—promising to walk on the street the next day with only Guido at her side. She had, until then, resolutely refused to walk anywhere outdoors excepting in Dr. Koenig's back yard. Frau Ursula's yard, belonging as it did to a more modern house,

was not fenced off, and Varvara Alexandrovna in consequence did not care to take her constitutional in it.

"Very well," Guido replied, "I'll let you off the open door for another week if you will promise to take a walk with me twice a day when the weather is fine."

Varvara Alexandrovna promised.

Beads of perspiration stood on her forehead when, the same afternoon, she walked down the stoop on Guido's arm. They walked only a block, for Guido, seeing how she agonized, and realizing from the iron grasp with which she held his arm, how very nervous and frightened she was, did not attempt a crossing with her. The next morning, however, she showed considerably less agitation, and even suggested crossing the street, as she was anxious to examine more closely some tulips which were just opening.

She progressed rapidly after that. Guido left her room-door open as if by accident one day, and when he returned a half-hour later, it was still open. After that she never demurred at an open door, and walked freely about the apartment alone.

Hauser and Frau Ursula were remarried early in May. Never had the difference between the two mothers been more apparent than upon this occasion. Frau Ursula, radiant with happiness, aglow with health, her fair, almost virginal loveliness set off to perfection by pearl-gray charmeuse and white lace, was indeed a woman in her prime, a woman who inspired envy in her contemporaries and in younger women wonder and the hope that they, at her age, would be as fit and as handsome as she. Varvara Alexandrovna, in her plain dusty black serge—she had resolutely refused fine clothes of every description—looked heart-breakingly old and faded and poor. It was the look of poverty, I think, that hurt the boy more cruelly than anything else in these later days. He and Frau Ursula had had many a talk about *Mamotschka's* obstinacy in regard to clothes.

"*Mutterchen*," Guido had said one day, "can't you persuade *Mamotschka* to get some decent things to wear like yourself?"

But Frau Ursula had already tried—had tried harder than Guido could have any conception of, as soon as Varvara Alexandrovna arrived, because she had wished to

spare Guido the pain of seeing his mother in garments so shabby and ill-fitting that the poorest American factory-worker would have disdained them.

"It is useless, Guido," Frau Ursula had replied.

Then Guido himself tried hard to persuade his mother to submit to at least one new gown in honor of *Mutterchen's* wedding.

Varvara Alexandrovna shook her head in denial.

"To please me," Guido urged.

Again his mother shook her head.

"You are obstinate, *Mamotschka*," Guido said, "and to be obstinate is to be naughty."

His mother smiled at him happily, but shook her head. She loved to have him tease her.

"What shall I do to make you consent?" Guido went on, ingratiatingly. "I know. I shall kiss you so hard and so long until you give in."

Varvara Alexandrovna was as delighted as a child. She laughed, but she continued to shake her head in silence.

"*Mamotschka*," Guido became serious. "There are piles and piles of securities and bonds, and stocks and deeds to houses and I don't know what else, right here in my name, which were turned over to me when I was twenty-one and which, in reality, belong to you."

"No," said Varvara Alexandrovna. Her voice had lost some of its unearthliness. She was beginning to emphasize her words. "No. All that money belonged to your father. At my request he left me only one-third of his fortune, the American widow's portion. For the rest I was trustee. All my own money I have spent. The remaining two-thirds are rightfully yours."

"*Mamotschka*, whether the money is mine or yours or *Mutterchen's*, what does it matter? We three belong together. The thing that does matter is that there is money close at hand, and that you are wearing clothes that—well, they are not nice."

"Guido Guidovich, if you had seen as much suffering as I have seen, you would see in fine clothes something shameful, not something to be proud of."

"It is not a matter of vanity or shame or pride," said Guido. "It is a matter of giving pleasure to others by wearing pretty things."

To value fine clothes as a source of giving pleasure to others seemed to be a new thought to Varvara Alexandrovna. She looked so amazed that Guido laughed outright, and kissed her hand gallantly to make up for the laugh.

Varvara Alexandrovna looked at her son piteously.

"It is against my convictions," she said, pleadingly.

"I surrender," Guido said, at once. "You have suffered too much for your convictions, *Mamotschka*, to have your rude son puncture even the least of them."

Thus it happened that at the wedding *Mamotschka* appeared in her old dusty black serge.

Only the most intimate friends were present, Dr. Koenig, the Erdmans, the Baumgartens, Dobronov, who adored Varvara Alexandrovna in spite of the glaring difference between her terrorist activities and his own non-resistance theories—Elschen and her father, as officiating clergyman, and Professor Geddes and his wife. There was, hence, no hostile or unfriendly eye to see Varvara Alexandrovna's poor dress. But Guido endured cruel pangs nevertheless. The two mothers were so painfully unlike each other. Frau Ursula's blonde beauty and exquisite grooming found a pitiful foil in Varvara Alexandrovna's broken physique unrelieved by a becoming gown. Yet never had Guido loved Frau Ursula more tenderly than at this moment. He admired and revered Varvara Alexandrovna, but this did not blind him to the fact that her fanaticism would never have allowed her to devote herself body and soul and mind to one mere child—she craved a larger outlook and a wider field of action, and Guido was human enough and man enough to love Frau Ursula for the restricted feminine field of mercy in which she had moved and of which he had been the chief beneficiary, a field so restricted that, as a matter of principle, Varvara Alexandrovna would not have suffered it for herself.

Mamotschka commanded his love because he was blood of her blood and flesh of her flesh and because a certain spiritual kinship superimposed itself upon the flesh and blood ties which knit them together. And she was sanctified by her suffering. But Frau Ursula stood for every memory and concept and impression clustering about the word "mother."

As Guido stood at her side, watching her being married all over again to Hauser, his thoughts were occupied solely with her. He felt a certain joyous reaction to her happiness. He had, for the moment, forgotten both Elschen and Janet, both Otto and *Mamotschka*. This time, he felt certain, Frau Ursula's marriage would bring her happiness.

Frau Ursula, the marriage ceremony concluded, touched her lips to Hauser and then, turning to Guido, flung herself into the boy's arms.

"*Mutterchen!*" He kissed her through the tears which, ever ready, were streaming down her cheeks. "*Mutterchen, Hebes, kleines Mutterchen, diesmal viel Glueck!*" and he kissed her again and again.

"Here, here, let off at last," said Hauser, laughing good-naturedly and tapping Guido on the shoulder. And then Guido realized what Hauser had perceived before: Frau Ursula was on the verge of hysterics.

"She is yours," Guido said, mock-magnificently to Hauser, and everybody laughed. But Hauser's and Guido's eyes were grave. Simultaneously their hands reached forward. Vigorously, almost with passion, they shook each other by the hand. There was no need of words between these two men. In that hand-shake, prolonged so immoderately that the facile laugh of merry-makers again went round, Hauser and Guido buried the hatchet forever. Suddenly, with a start, Guido remembered *Mamotschka*. He went to her, and saw that her eyes were fixed upon him with an odd expression. This expression mirrored nothing as crass as jealousy, or as crude as resentment at her own temporary eclipse. It was simply that she had felt herself pushed beyond his ken. She had, for the moment, become an outsider.

"Well," he said, tentatively, sitting down beside her.

"How you love her!" she said. There was no envy in her voice, only a sort of wonder that any earthly bond should be so strong.

"Yes, I love her more than I can say," Guido said, simply.

"In watching your way with her," Varvara Alexandrovna continued, "when you are gentle and when you are cross, I have sometimes wondered whether you would have loved me as much if I had reared you."

Guido sat in silence for a moment. His native tact taught him to avoid the unkind banality of offering an insincerity in reply.

"It seems to me, *Mamotschka*," he said, "that we can never give the same affection, in kind, to any two human beings. The expression 'to love more' or 'to love as much' is really an absurdity. No two persons, not even twins, are alike. How then can two entirely different persons be expected to react upon a third character in the same way? When we say 'to love as much' we really wish to express not quantitative but qualitative similarity.

"Now the love I feel for you is entirely different from the love which I feel for *Mutterchen*. There are things I would not think of talking about to you, there are things which *Mutterchen* would not understand.

"All in all," Guido continued, "I consider myself a very fortunate young man to have two mothers. My one mother deserts me—lo! another mother is at hand to take her place."

Varvara Alexandrovna placed her hand upon him.

"What a boy you are," she said. "So truthful, and yet so gallant. Guido Guidovich, I am going back to Russia very soon. I am wondering whether my son will go with me, or whether I am going alone."

Guido frowned. He rose abruptly.

"To-morrow," he said, "we will discuss all that. To-night is *Mutterchen's* night."

Varvara Alexandrovna flushed a little at Guido's unintentional rebuke, but she said nothing.

She reminded him of his promise the next morning. It was a lovely morning in May, one of those cool spring mornings when earth and sky and tree and broken shard of color appear to have received an additional coat of nature's ethereal veneer, so glossy and clean and cameo-like is the shining morning-face of all created things.

The air had brought a bit of color even into Varvara Alexandrovna's flaccid cheeks. She and Guido were sitting on the porch, warmly clad, for the air was searching and chill and only the sunshine was warm.

"Guido Guidovich," his mother began, "innumerable times have I sought to discuss this topic with you. Innumerable

times have you evaded me. Will you deign to meet the issue to-day?"

"I will deign to meet the issue to-day," Guido replied, smiling. But in spite of his smile, his heart was heavy. He knew that in the discussion which he had staved off so long, but which he could stave off no longer, he would be confronted with the necessity of being false to his convictions or with the barely less painful alternative of saying unamiable things to his mother. And the thought of further wounding that much-wounded creature filled him with dismay unspeakable.

Guido's condition had made his return to college impossible, and had rendered enlistment equally impossible for the present, so that he and Varvara Alexandrovna had spent many quiet, uneventful days together, in which she had gradually told him the story of her life. From all she told him he gleaned much about Russian conditions. Much he already knew from Dobronov. As a result he had by this time completely exonerated his mother, because he now fully realized that, as there are moments when a red-corpuscle man will have recourse to his fists, so there are contingencies in which the Russian's curious blend of religious fervor, love of humanity and capacity for moral indignation make acts of terrorism inevitable because legal redress, obtainable in constitutional countries, is precluded. But it did not follow that because he understood the psychology which underlay Varvara Alexandrovna's motivation and activity he should applaud it or seek to embrace it.

He realized that he would have great difficulty in making this clear to his mother—the task would be almost as great as making Miss Maxwell comprehend that while he understood her flag-burning viewpoint he did not share it.

Mamotschka opened the conversation by asking Guido point-blank whether he would return with her to Russia and embrace the Cause.

"There are more reasons than one why I cannot do that," Guido replied, warily. "In the first place, my own country is at war. As soon as I am strong enough, I intend to enlist as an airman."

Varvara Alexandrovna said, quickly:

"You speak of your 'own country.' Your father was of pure German stock, I am pure Russian. In no way are

you American, excepting that you were born and bred here."

"Yet you wished me to be both born and bred here, because American soil is free soil. Did you not?"

"Yes. You know your father's purpose and mine. But even this country cannot be truthfully said to be free. Like every other country it groans under the burdens imposed by capital. These burdens will increase as the rich grow richer and the poor poorer. Also I had hoped that my son would see the futility, the asininity of war."

"Certainly I see that," Guido replied, smiling. "This war of ours is a protest against war. Whatin heaven's name is a country to do if another country attacks it, murders its citizens and makes a general nuisance of itself?"

Varvara Alexandrovna's reply was the classical socialistic reply. Capital had made this war as it had made every other war in history.

And so they were in the thick of it at last.

Guido realized that his mother was about to unpack all the mechanistic and economic stock arguments which the socialistic mind has evolved. He parried as best he could. His mother argued without heat of anger but also without tepidity of feeling. Guido, always fearful of hurting her, held himself self-vauntly in check, and in consequence cut a poor figure as a disputant, as he fully realized.

"I am afraid," his mother wound up, "that you have never given serious thought to socialism."

Guido suddenly became aware that he must meet the issue squarely. His mother's health had improved marvelously in the last fortnight. Her spirit was unbroken, was as bright and undaunted as on the day when she had first given herself, her life, her body, her mind and her soul to the Cause. Nothing less than ruthless and uncompromising sincerity would do in dealing with her.

"*Mamotschka*," he said, "I am afraid I have not been quite honest with you in the past. I have hedged. It is better that you should know that I have given serious thought to socialism and have condemned it, than that you should think me so shallow as to believe that one of the great movements of the day has entirely escaped me."

Varvara Alexandrovna's eyes beamed with pleasure.

"Guido Guidovich," she said, "I knew that you were

hiding something from me. Speak plainly and without fear. One of three things is bound to happen. Either I will convert you to socialism; or you will convert me away from it; or neither of us will budge an inch."

"And I add this to your prophecy," Guido rejoined, laughing. "Neither of us will budge an inch. Your son is quite as obstinate as yourself."

"To it," Varvara Alexandrovna said, her eyes sparkling with pleasure in the coming tourney.

Guido briefly told his mother the history of his short-lived career as a socialist. He did not withhold from her that socialism had seemed to him a religion rather than a political cause; that he had believed that Christ had taught socialism, that he had thrown himself heart and soul into winning to his view Yomanato and Dobronov; of the Brothers and Sisters Society, of the various minor episodes which had been a sort of preliminary to the wind-up, and how, finally, during his convalescence, he had thrashed out the entire matter once more to make sure that he had not judged hastily.

"In brief," he concluded, "my slight detour into socialistic fields has left me a better American than before, and by being a good American I mean being a firm and irrevocable adherent of democracy."

"By all means," Varvara Alexandrovna leaned forward eagerly. "But real democracy, democracy carried to its logical conclusion is socialism."

"That is the same delusion that I labored under," Guido replied. "Socialism, most emphatically, is not an extension of democracy, but a reversal of democracy. There are surface similarities, it is true, which at first glance seem to justify the belief that democracy and socialism are identical. In truth they are antagonistic—quite as antagonistic and as irreconcilable as despotism and democracy."

"My son, what are you saying!" Varvara Alexandrovna exclaimed. Horror was painted in her features.

"It is true," Guido continued, quietly. "An autocracy is the despotic rule of one man acting through a clique of men of his own or his favorite's choosing. Socialism, if fully realized, would be the despotism of a strong and determined minority."

"You might as well say the same of democracy," said *Mamotschka*.

"I think not," Guido replied, smiling self-confidently, "and I can prove it to you, I think. Socialism emphatically represents the interests of the working class, or—to use the socialistic word—the proletariat. It expressly declares itself to be the enemy of the middle classes—of the bourgeoisie."

"In Russia," said Varvara Alexandrovna, "there is no middle class."

"That is Russia's great misfortune," said Guido. "The middle class, sending forth innumerable tendrils into both the upper and the lower layers of society, and consisting itself of a multitude of layers varying slightly, one from the other in mental and social make-up, forms the chief artery, the Aorta, as it were, of a nation's life. While the middle class is healthy and prosperous, the nation is safe."

"But Russia has no middle class——"

"If Russia were a democracy a middle class would arise out of itself."

"I do not understand," said Varvara Alexandrovna, looking puzzled. "It is the middle class that tends to enrich itself at the expense of the proletariat."

"That is the socialist doctrine, but it is not the democratic doctrine," Guido replied. "In America the poor man, the man of the people, may by accident or through efforts of his own become well-to-do overnight. There is a tendency in this country for each generation to make its way into a slightly higher layer in the social fabric than was occupied by the preceding generation. That sort of thing makes for contentment—ambition is not throttled at birth nor are legitimate aspirations after betterment frowned upon."

"And the workers are recruited by immigration?"

"Largely. Not entirely. How would socialism recruit its workers?"

"Everybody would have to work, of course, that is entirely plain," said Varvara Alexandrovna.

"Yes, but would everybody work? Socialism, by breeding class dissension, by magnifying the needs of one class, breeds also envy and evil-mindedness. And we have seen what envy and evil-mindedness have done to Germany. It

is a practical object lesson for the entire world—autocracy on the one hand, in the upper layer of society, surrounded by an arrogant and tyrannical aristocracy; on the other hand, in the lower layers of society, socialism. Both factors were primarily despotic. The socialistic current was held in check by the autocratic current, but threatened it with a menace so unflinching and continuous that the autocratic current, seeing itself seriously jeopardized, welcomed the War—made it perhaps—for the purpose of re-establishing the military class as the idol and the master of the people.

"You say," Guido continued, "that everybody would work under a socialistic regime. I am more inclined to think that a lot of shirking would be done, perhaps by the very men in power. Envy and hatred and evil-mindedness are flimsy building materials with which to rear a social edifice."

"You speak continually of envy and hatred and evil-mindedness," said Varvara Alexandrovna. "Are the capitalists not filled with the same emotions? Have they one thought beyond their own financial aggrandizement?"

"Some of them have. Yes. Besides, is it not the hope of material betterment—I am using a milder term than you did—that impels the proletariat to embrace socialism?"

"But the proletariat has a right to demand material betterment, has a right to demand a just share of the profits made by the labor of their hands."

"Of course it has," Guido rejoined, heartily. "And we have in Labor Unions and strikes very effective weapons with which the workers can enforce their rights."

"But why should it be necessary to wage a conflict over these rights?" Varvara Alexandrovna pursued. "In this country you have—nominally at least—abolished class distinctions. Why not abolish economic distinctions as well? Why not allow the government to own all public utilities and to control all capital?"

Guido remained silent for a little while before answering. Then he said:

"For the longest time, before I ever thought of being a socialist, government ownership of public utilities seemed to me to be a very fine thing. Latterly I have completely changed my mind. Apart from the fact that government

ownership would do away with the healthy competition which non-socialists believe necessary for the obtainment of the highest degree of efficiency, I see in government ownership, if unduly extended, precisely the same menace as I do in socialism. A tendency is created to give entirely too much power to the government, which is only another way of saying that government ownership paves the way for a despotism of a new and more terrible type than any despotism of the past."

"That despotism, my son," said Varvara Alexandrovna, "is now vested in capitalism. It is against this despotism that socialism directs its best energies."

"I do not think," said Guido, "that the power vested in capitalism deserves to be called despotism. While economic power is centered in private hands, *labor can always hope to obtain redress by appealing to the government.* But if government holds the reins of economic power, who would there then be to appeal to for relief from onerous usages and oppressive regulations?"

"It is one of the fundamental principles of American democracy," Guido continued, "that the judiciary, the legislative and administrative functions of the government must not rest in the same hands, but must remain intact one from the other. The application of this principle was only one of the many delicate balance-wheels devised by the framers of the Constitution to guard against undue centralization on the one hand, against too lax a coalition on the other. Under a socialistic regime this delicate balance would be destroyed because the *arm of government wielding economic power would be virtually in control of every governmental function.*"

Varvara Alexandrovna looked perplexed.

"Let me illustrate what I mean with an example," said Guido. "In one of the European countries in which the state owns the railroads, the railroad employees were dissatisfied with working conditions and threatened to strike. The government, by special enactment, promptly appointed all male employees to military duty, and as a soldier who leaves his post is a deserter, and a deserter is punishable with execution, the strike was still-born."

"But if the government owns all public utilities and all capital, why should not working conditions be made satis-

factory to all the workers?" Varvara Alexandrovna demanded.

"Because human nature is human nature," Guido replied, "and a wholesome selfishness, not unduly exaggerated, is in the end the best altruism because it makes for independence, efficiency and health. Under existing conditions that selfishness is checked and restricted, it is not allowed to grow very far beyond the wholesome point. But remove the brakes, as a socialistic regime would do, and each group of workers would develop an egoism so prodigious that the welfare of every other group of workers would be menaced. At present, the quarrel of the workers is with capital, and the workers always have at their command a formidable weapon in their ability to strike. But under a socialistic regime the quarrel of the workers would be with the government, against which, as we have seen, they may be rendered powerless, or with other groups of workers who, as co-voters, may not have seen fit to grant the demands of the first group. From such conditions anarchy—not the scientific anarchy of Prince Kropotkin—but anarchy unscientific, lawless and cruel, would be certain to result."

"All these thoughts are new to me," Varvara Alexandrovna said, thoughtfully.

"At the present moment," Guido continued, "socialism tends not to obliterate class distinctions, as democracy does, but helps to emphasize them in every possible way. You said before that under a socialistic regime all men and women would be workers. Let me say that in a democracy almost all men and women are workers, and this tendency is becoming stronger and stronger.

"The primary fallacy of socialism," Guido continued, "is that it proceeds from the wrong premise that human nature, in the future, is to become entirely virtuous, and that, once socialism has been accomplished, all selfish desires will be elided from the human heart. At the same time, socialism sets up the amazingly contradictory premise that human nature, in so far as it has amassed wealth, is entirely corrupt, and upon this premise it proceeds to base its present-day argument justifying the economic interpretation of history.

"Now human nature will probably never become entirely virtuous, and, thank heaven, it is emphatically not entirely

corrupt," Guido went on. "The one theory is as ridiculous as the other. It is equally ridiculous to posit that all rich men, simply because they are rich, are bad, and that all poor men, by virtue of their poverty, are good.

"In the true democracy, such as ours, the rights of the workers are jealously guarded. There is much talk of establishing government bureaus whose purpose shall be to give vocational advice, so that the terrible waste of human material, pouring itself year after year into channels for which it is not adapted, shall be stopped. This is a true democratic measure. It starts from the perfectly sound assumption that here is an economic disparity between the natural abilities of men, and its avowed object is to prevent the possibility of human misfits occurring in the future by recognizing the inalienable rights of the less favored individuals to be provided with the means of earning a livelihood which will yield them the largest possible income commensurate with their natural endowments.

"To a democracy which like ours is fortunate in having two equally strong parties, health and longevity are assured, because each of these two parties forms an automatic and constant corrective of the other. The history of the United States is the history of ceaseless friction, truceless quarreling, frequent compromising between its different political parties."

"But, my son, is it honest to compromise?" Varvara Alexandrovna looked horrified again. "If our convictions are sincere, how can we abandon the least of them?"

"By picking the most sincere and important ones and sticking to them, and letting the rest go to the wall," Guido replied, smiling at his mother's bewilderment. "By realizing, also, that the other fellow is quite as honest and sincere as ourselves. There is no dishonesty in trying to arrange matters so that all are pleased, or partially pleased. 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' you know. And in compromising we give something to our opponents of greater worth than gold or precious stones. Where, then, is the dishonesty?"

"Nevertheless a compromise strikes me as essentially dishonest," Varvara Alexandrovna replied, thoughtfully. "I would never give up the least of my convictions. I couldn't. Never."

"If you believed in democracy, instead of in socialism, you would look at matters in a different light," said Guido. "Of course, there are points of principle on which no honest man could or would compromise. But where the point at issue is one of expediency, of material welfare, of economic or commercial importance, it is entirely equitable that a compromise should be effected. Moreover, in compromising, we admit not merely the sincerity of the other side, but its equal right to be considered along with ourselves. And this principle is the principle upon which democracy rests—the equal rights of all.

"So much for principle. From the viewpoint of practicability, if there were not at times an honest compromise between the conflicting parties, the business of the nation could not be carried on and anarchy would result. What, for that matter are our recurring elections but a compromising on a huge scale? Almost one-half of the American nation is necessarily dissatisfied with the outcome of the polls at every presidential election, but because the right of majority rule is a firmly established principle, is the only manner of compromise possible if the activities of the nation are not to be brought to a stand-still, the minority accepts defeat with good grace and waits for the pendulum to swing back to its own party, as ultimately, of course, it is bound to do."

"Remarkable," said Varvara Alexandrovna. She seemed stunned by the thoughts which, commonplace enough to every American, were startlingly new to herself.

"There is no fear in a democracy such as ours," Guido continued, "that the underdog, the proletariat, will get the worst of it in the long run. There has been much legislation in the last decade or two which is eminently democratic in the higher, ethical sense. We have a law directed against trusts—this in the interests of the small business man—which is intended to curb the unscrupulous, selfish large money interests which, unless a brake were applied, might be tempted to gather all enterprises of one kind under one centralized head, just as socialism would do in making the government the sole owner of all large business enterprises. This law, therefore, is anti-socialistic as well as anti-capitalistic, and, through benefiting a large number of

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men at the expense of a handful of millionaires, is truly democratic.

"We have yet another law which is directed against the railroads and prohibits them from discriminating in their freight tariff in favor of the big shipper. Apparently this is an unfair law, as—in America, at least—the man who buys a large quantity of one sort of goods usually pays a lower price than the man who buys only a small quantity. But a discriminating tariff operates in the interest of the big shipper, and distinctly threatens the very existence of his small competitor. But the small competitor who with his fellows makes up the backbone of the nation, our legislators decided, must be protected at every cost. A new law was accordingly passed to protect the small shipper, showing that our legislators had the sound good common sense to legislate against abstract justice as soon as abstract justice had become human injustice.

"There was a time when the income tax was denounced as unconstitutional and as undemocratic. The sound common sense of the people ruled otherwise. An amendment to the Constitution was adopted, and all Americans now pay a graduated income tax."

Varvara Alexandrovna sat very still for a few minutes after Guido had finished. Suddenly she said:

"Guido Guidovich, I am too old to adapt myself to such new ideas. During my twenty years in prison my mind traveled unhampered in the same grooves, and the grooves have become too deep to be changed. Yet I am willing to believe that you are right. Come with me to Russia—be the Russian Apostle of Democracy!"

Guido shrank back into his chair, white, frightened—and it must be confessed—angry. For the moment he had forgotten the Destiny which was supposed to be waiting for him. He did not relish having it thrust at him so abruptly.

"Impossible," he said, "impossible."

"Why impossible?" Varvara Alexandrovna began to plead with Guido with an earnestness and an impassioned tenderness which hurt him, but could not change his inflexible decision. He pitied his mother immeasurably. He realized that he was gainsaying her the great, passionate wish of her life. And yet, in spite of the compassion with

which she filled him, he was infinitely revolted. Her almost humble supplication seemed to him *gauche*, ridiculous, almost wicked. Who was he, who had muddled his own and others' lives so hopelessly, to have a Destiny foisted upon him? He explained to her, as best he could, that he felt no call, no vocation to go to Russia.

"It cannot be," Varvara Alexandrovna exclaimed, with an intensity which Guido had never seen her manifest before, "that my great wish is to come to nought. You do not recognize your own powers. Come with me to Russia. You speak Russian fluently. Your American accent only adds to its charm. I know my countrymen. Speak to them as you have spoken to me. You will sweep your hearers off their feet. They will follow whither you lead. They will acclaim you. My son, see what faith I have in you—I am willing to introduce to Russia in your person a formidable enemy of the Cause for which I have suffered so much, for great as is my faith in the Cause, my faith in you is greater. It cannot be otherwise than that you are destined for great things. Come with me to Russia. Ah, my son, my son, they will make a dictator of you and then you can introduce democratic reforms and methods!"

Guido stared at his mother in trago-comic bewilderment. Nothing that he had heard or read about Russia exemplified more glaringly than *Mamotschka's* last sentence the inability of a certain cast of European mind to grasp the true, inner meaning of democracy. How curious that this should be so? Were the Anglo-Saxon nations indeed the only one with an instinctive feeling and understanding for democracy? He gave it up.

"It would be useless, *Mamotschka*," he said, wondering whether he would be able to make it clearer to her, "for one man, a foreigner, to attempt to make over Russia—or any other nation. Every people has got to evolve its own form of government. No other form of government, be it ever so perfect, will, in the long run, be acceptable. Now, as an American, democracy seems to me the ideal form of government, but either a nation has a genius for democracy, or it hasn't. All the world knows that the two strongest socialistic currents have been generated in Germany and in Russia. It is possible, of course, that a socialistic form of government is possible for a people

whose genius lies in that direction, but I, for one, do not believe it.

"I do not believe it because I see in continual compromise the only hope of true stability and guarantee of democratic government. But the spirit of compromise cannot be carried beyond a certain point. No people can or should compromise with a form of government which seems to it intrinsically immoral. As such I consider socialism. As such millions of my fellow-citizens consider socialism. The socialistic party has never been as strong in this country as in others, and what strength it has gathered to itself has been drawn chiefly from the alien population."

"Always, always," said Varvara Alexandrovna, "you speak of your country and not of mine. Never of mine."

"Forgive me, *Mamotschka*. All this is by way of introduction. I honestly believe that a democracy such as ours would not have been possible to a people in whom a strongly integrated nucleus of the Anglo-Saxon element did not exist. So far we have successfully assimilated the immigrants from European lands. It is an open question whether we will be able to do so in the future.

"And this brings me to Russia. In Russia, you say, there is no middle-class to speak of. In Russia there has always been an autocracy. Action and reaction, socially as well as physically, are equal in force and opposite in direction. If this law really applies sociologically, as is generally believed, the overthrow of czarism should be followed by a strong socialistic reaction.

"Now, I repeat, it is possible, of course, that a socialistic state is feasible and can be rendered stable and satisfactory. If this is feasible, it will be feasible only in countries like Russia or Germany, where an autocratic form of government has existed throughout generations, and apparently has not been distasteful to a large majority of the people, and where, moreover, the majority of the people have neither taste nor talent for self-government.

"If a socialistic state is feasible, Russia—or Germany—will solve the problem. No outsider can help Russia. The genius of her own people must effloresce and bloom and attain fruition in its own way.

"If it is not possible, then—God pity Russia! One or two things is then bound to befall. Either there will be

an intervention of foreign powers, and the placing under political tutelage of the entire Russian people, and the consequent acceptance by Russia of an enforced democracy under a foreign protectorate. Or the foreign powers will not intervene, and then there will be a long interregnum in Russia in which various parties will try out various attempts at government. And after much bloodshed and suffering and agonizing, it will inevitably be borne in upon all the contending parties that in a compromise among themselves lies the sole hope of a satisfactory government, of freedom, stability and prosperity. And this road, needless to say, is the road which leads to democracy.

"A century may pass before this end will be accomplished. It took France almost an entire century to establish herself securely upon a republican footing. Again and again she drifted back to the monarchical form. Russia will drift through socialistic forms instead. The American Revolution was successful at once in establishing a republican form of government chiefly for two reasons. The thirteen colonies were united by a common fear of an enemy from without, and amid the clamor of conflicting opinions there became very plain the intrinsic necessity to deal fairly and squarely with each other, and to recognize the needs and desires of the neighboring States, so that the neighboring States might reciprocate in kind. The differences, in other words, were sectional, rather than social. In Russia, as once in France, the differences are social rather than sectional."

The only effect Guido's words had upon his mother were to cause her to renew her plea. Why was he so willfully blind with regard to his political ability? She had now become convinced that her boy would be able to organize a strong democratic party, which ultimately, through the force of its own current, would generate a strong counter-party. Guido perceived with an inward gasp that she was applying the word "democratic" in the particular, not in the general sense. She herself would continue a socialist. She had not expected, she said, that her son would fall in entirely with her own ideas. But neither had she expected that his ideas would be so subversive of her own. But he had ideas—that was the principal thing. In that one particular she had not been disappointed.

"Guido, my son," she concluded, "it is unthinkable that your father and myself were mistaken in our hopes and desires for your political leadership. For months before you were conceived, every thought, every heart-beat both of your father and myself was directed to that one end. All gynecologists unite in declaring that pre-natal influences cannot be overestimated. And I will not believe, not to my dying day, that there does not reside in you a vast ability to serve humanity, if you will only consent to do so."

Distasteful as it was to Guido to take the Synthesis seriously, he realized that the time had come when he must squarely meet the nightmare which had haunted his adolescence. Also it seemed that there was a side, not wholly humorous, to the Synthesis which had escaped him so far.

He was entirely serious when he finally spoke.

"*Mamotschka*," he said, "you have told me, and I had been told before you told me, that my father was an enthusiastic advocate of the strong centralized government of Imperial Germany. The monarchical form did not offend him. He saw advantages in it. You believed in a socialism so lightly girded and bound that it might almost be called anarchism. Am I right?"

"Yes," said Varvara Alexandrovna, "you are right." She looked a little frightened, as if she feared that her son, her hope, the youth with a Destiny, was about to shatter her dream irretrievably and irreparably.

"*Mamotschka*, do you not see what the Synthesis really is—in what way it eventualized in me? I love America because I love democracy. And what is this strong democratic conviction in me but a result of an unconscious compromise, an actual synthesis between your opinions and my father's? You represented the two extremes, he and you. I eschew extremes. I travel along the Road of the Golden Mean, the Synthetic Road, the Road of Meliorism, the Road of Democracy.

"More particularly," Guido continued, "I believe in American democracy. I believe in America's destiny." He lingered a moment over the word which had played so prominent and unwelcome a part in his life. After a moment he resumed:

"A great Russian writer declares that all nations which

are not moribund believe in their destiny. This is true. Up to a certain point all nations are right in believing in their destinies, for all nations, like all individuals, have received for their own good and for the good of all men certain priceless gifts. But these gifts, whatever they may be, if they are to be a blessing and not a curse, must be offered freely to other people and not foisted upon them by force.

"I cannot speak of Russia's gift to the world because I do not know Russia. From the handful of Russians whom I have met, I judge it may be that Russia's passion for sincerity is to be her priceless contribution to the human race.

"But I can speak and wish to speak of American democracy, because what I believe in with all my heart and soul is a democracy which guarantees equal rights to all manner of men—equal rights under which to live and enjoy and operate. By all manner of men I mean not merely all sorts and conditions of men, but men of all races, men of all religious persuasions—but not of all political faiths. For there are political creeds which bear in themselves a germ so hostile and opposite to democracy that we cannot and must not and dare not tolerate them in our midst. Democrats, Republicans, Independents, Reformers, Progressives, all these fit nicely into the pattern of our great American state. But we do not choose to traffic with monarchists, and if we are wise we will refuse to traffic with socialists as well. The tyranny of the one would be quite as intolerable as the despotism of the other, for I repeat, and repeat again and again, *The Spirit of Willingness to Compromise is the Great Gift which America has bestowed upon the world*, and we are and must be tolerant of those political persuasions which are inimical to the spirit of compromise; and with their adherents and progenitors alone among men we must refuse to have anything to do. Intolerant only of intolerance, America must not, durst not, shall not for her own good compromise with those who see in compromise mere expediency, dishonest barter, underground methods and selfishness. But for those who believe in the inviolate sanctity and maiden virtue of the Anglo-Saxon Doctrine of Compromise, there is room in our midst. For others there is not. For democracy not

merely thrives upon compromise, but democracy is compromise incorporate, incarnate and sane.

"To be a true American is to be honest and kind, to respect oneself and one's fellows; to respect the rights of others and one's own as well. It means to take no unfair advantage of others, and to resist others if they take undue advantage of ourselves; it means to be cheerful in adversity, temperate in prosperity, kind and humane and charitable at all times. It means, on the one hand, not to fear poverty, on the other, not to covet undue wealth.

"I can conceive no finer destiny for myself or any other man than to be a good American citizen. If I achieve that destiny, I shall be content. I ask no other destiny and aspire to no other.

"If that ambition falls below your own, as I am aware it does, I am sorry. I cannot change myself, nor would I—in this particular—if I could. My entire faith centers in my own country. If I were given to prayer, I should pray to be preserved from any taint of prejudice tending to undermine my Americanism.

"This is my entire creed—the American's creed. The man who falls below it, though he traces his ancestry back to the Mayflower, is a poor American. The man who holds to it, who lives up to it, though he is a poor immigrant and knows not a word of English, is a good American. Judged by that standard, though I have not a drop of English or American blood in my veins, I hope to prove myself a good American: No title, not that of duke or king or emperor, ranks half so high with me as the simple badge of plain, honest-to-goodness manhood: an American citizen."

Varvara Alexandrovna rose. She was very white.

"All you say to the contrary," she said, "only serves to strengthen my conviction in your destiny. But I shall tease you no further. You have been very patient with me. I am content to wait. Go—serve your own country first. I have no fear that you will be killed. Nature—or God—does not produce minds such as yours only to waste them. You will yet achieve some noble thing, and when you have achieved it, remember, my son, that your father and I had part in you."

CHAPTER XIX

AS Guido became stronger, he indulged himself generously in his favorite pastime of walking. As Anasquoit did not cover much territory, it therefore happened that he traversed virtually the entire length of Bismarck Street twice a day. Few Anasquoitians walked on any other street for pleasure.

This was in the early days of the War, when the pro-Germans had not yet had time to readjust themselves to altered conditions. In consequence queer things were heard in the streets of this little German town on American soil. One estimable old lady wept as she pictured in language almost Biblical in its terse vigor what untold tragedies were sure to befall hapless America for daring to cross the will of the Lord's Anointed. Another ancient dame in language picturesquely florid, rebuked her grandchild for making a jest at Wilhelm's expense. "Know, my child," she said, "the Kaiser is right next to Jesus Christ." An old gentleman, whose condition of mind was probably in as parlous a state as the health of his body, prophesied how America, after being conquered by Germany, would live to bless the day of that conquest, for the blessings of German Kultur, and System, and Decency, and the absence of public graft, would amply recompense America for the slight inconvenience of having to change her nationality.

Utterances of this sort were, of course, too preposterously ridiculous to be taken seriously. Guido laughed himself sick more than once in the course of these hyphenated monologues. For he resolutely declined, now that America was in the War, to argue with anyone, and usually allowed these "lovers of America" to have their say without putting in a single word.

And there were those well-wishers of America via German victory who claimed to be the favored possessors of "inside information," proving plainly that Wall Street had deliberately made the war. These were the people who

looked wise and wagged their heads and hinted of things they could say if they would.

The entire country was the dupe of the Wall Street clique, so said these calamity howlers, and of the perfidious Anglo-American press which was deliberately falsifying every war report. Germany was stronger than ever; Germany was far from starving; German arms were everywhere victorious; Germany, it was a foregone conclusion, would beat America to a frazzle along with all the rest of the nations. Germany was invincible. England, with the assistance and connivance of Wall Street, had dragged America into the War so that America would help pay the war indemnities. Only the German papers were getting the right news, as everybody knew who knew anything at all. But the trouble with America was that she thought she knew it all; and England had "made America the goat." If America had only listened to kindly, honest Germany instead of to hypocritical Albion, the catastrophe would have been averted. But the entire American press had been subsidized by English capital in the early days of the War, and hence these fictitious reports of French and English victories and German defeat which Americans were simple enough to believe.

This sort of thing was, of course, very much more serious, showing, as it did, machinations delicately insidious on the part of the German propagandist, and therefore dangerous to the American Commonwealth.

It seemed to Guido that these stories hinted at a tragic facility in self-delusion and hypocrisy of which he would never have suspected the German mind.

The German-Americans, as Guido perceived, had themselves only to thank for the grotesque yarns that made the round during the first five months after America's entrance into the War, and which gained credence even in educated American circles.

There was, for example, the Story of the Old Woman's Eyes. The American daughter of a German mother who had preferred to remain in Germany to emigrating with the daughter, so the story ran, had written home saying that in her mother's place she would kill the Kaiser and rid the world of its worst plague. In reply she had received a small box, upon opening which the daughter had

fainted dead away. For the box contained a brief note to the effect that her mother had been executed that morning to punish her for her daughter's suggestion, in testimony whereof, at the Kaiser's command, the old woman's eyes had been removed from her head, same being enclosed with the note.

There was the even more gruesome story of the German *Kadaver-Fettverwertungsanstalten*.

In these, according to lengthy reports ostensibly derived from reputable sources, the Germans were shipping back from the front the carcasses of horses and the corpses of the slain soldiers to be subjected to certain chemical and combusive processes which would yield the fats of which Germany stood in such desperate need.

There was the story, most horrible of all, of a village in France where hundreds of little girls had been seen with one hand only. To punish one child of this town for "making a nose" at a German officer, the German authorities had had all the little ones of the village lined up, and had cut off the left hand of every other child. In view of the Belgian horrors which were proven to be indubitably true by the Bryce report, this story at first glance bore the semblance of verisimilitude. But there presented itself the question as to what measures had been taken to save the lives of the youngsters, since, if one of the large arteries of the body is severed, the afflicted person is doomed to bleed to death in a very short time unless a surgeon is at hand to properly bind up the wound. Had the German military corps found time to apply such bandages to ten score or more little girls?

There was also, during the spring and summer of nineteen hundred and seventeen, a crop of stories quite as ridiculous as the above, but lacking the element of horror. There was the story of the Talking Baby, which Guido heard in at least half a dozen versions. One version had it that a paralyzed child of seven years, which had never learned to speak, had suddenly broken into speech prophesying the Kaiser's ruin and damnation. A second version made the child a deaf-mute instead of a paralytic. From far Texas came a third version which reported that upon an infant of six months there had suddenly descended the double miracle of speech and prophecy.

Guido made mental note of all these war stories. He meant to regale Frau Ursula and her husband with them upon their return from their honeymoon. Hauser was one of the few Americans of German birth who, from sincere conviction, after holding out for over a year, had suddenly and vehemently recanted, unreservedly adopting the Allied-American viewpoint.

The Hausers returned the middle of May. Hauser had been fortunate enough to find a purchaser for his beautiful mansion, and the government was negotiating with him for the use of the Leviathan as a military hospital. He was anxious to conclude the winding-up of all of his affairs as quickly as possible. He wanted to break with the past and to bury it, and he wanted his failure to be an honest one.

"If it takes me the rest of my life," he said, "I am going to pay every cent I owe."

As a large New York department store had offered him a position as assistant manager at a splendid salary, which he had accepted prior to his reconciliation with his wife, it was probable, as Frau Ursula pointed out, that five or six years would suffice to completely liquidate his debts. She would willingly have sacrificed her own small fortune in order to start Hauser out on a new venture of his own, but he had signed a cast-iron contract covering a three-years' engagement and he was glad of it. There are times in a man's life when being an employee at a succulent salary seems preferable to freedom and sleepless nights spent in the vain effort to finance that independence.

Frau Ursula derived satisfaction the most huge from the promptness with which Hauser had been pounced upon by the New York merchant prince. Frau Ursula was nothing if not feminine, and being feminine means a host of things in addition to possessing the talent for self-sacrifice which lies at the root of the character of every woman who is worth her salt. It means having a healthy curiosity in one's neighbors' doings, and in realizing that that healthy curiosity is reciprocated with interest on the part of one's neighbors. It means also a just pride in one's possessions, especially one's live stock such as husband and children. On the subject of Guido's admirable qualities we may be sure Frau Ursula bored most of her acquaint-

ances to death; Hauser she had always refrained from discussing with so integral and eloquent a silence that, when the divorce occurred, most of her friends had the pleasure of assuring each other that they had always suspected it was coming.

Her re-marriage to Hauser had, of course, set the town by the ears. The topic formed such a welcome relief from the everlasting War. Then Mrs. Grundys of Anasquoit had the time of their lives, but their pleasure was distinctly marred by the perplexing problems which the situation involved. And to perplex them the more, Frau Ursula now indulged in peans of praise of Hauser which fairly effervesced with sincerity and wifely love.

The Mrs. Grundys gave it up—it was beyond them.

It was shortly after Frau Ursula's and Hauser's return that Vasalov turned up unexpectedly one evening. He was entirely unchanged, and as dapper and vigorous and youthful-looking as ever. His youthful good looks found a heart-breaking foil in Varvara Alexandrovna. It was hard to believe that they were co-evals, so much older did *Mamotschka* look than her cousin.

It was an affecting meeting. Guido, having announced Vasalov to his mother, tactfully withdrew, but not before he had seen the convulsive joy with which the two cousins embraced. Suddenly he felt, as Varvara Alexandrovna had felt on the evening of Frau Ursula's wedding, that he was an outsider.

Frau Ursula was sitting in the dining-room alone, for Hauser went down to the Leviathan every evening after supper, and Guido went to her for comfort.

"Guess who came just now," he said, for, as they were again servantless, he had opened the door.

"Not Vasalov?" she inquired.

"Confound him—yes," said Guido, with a mirthless laugh.

Frau Ursula dropped her sewing and her hand upon the table with a little thud.

"Now I suppose I shall have to put him up for the night?" she said.

"Nothing of the sort."

"But he'll be wanting to talk to your mother until all hours of the night."

"Well, I dare say an anarchist doesn't need a nursery-maid to look after him if he chooses to walk abroad at midnight."

"But I wish to please your mother, Guido."

"Oh, my mother!"

There was, of course, none of the old danger and contempt in Guido's voice, but it vibrated with such impassioned bitterness and pain that Frau Ursula rose swiftly and came and stood by Guido's side.

"*Mein Herzensjunge*," she said, "I am so sorry he has turned up again."

Guido scowled down at her. A stranger might have thought that he was holding Frau Ursula responsible for the presence of his unwelcome kinsman.

"Why the devil does he have to come here now?" Guido continued. "He's a pest and a nuisance. He's a criminal. He's a bore. I was just beginning to forget about *Mamotschka's* past—I mean, oh! you know what I mean," he broke off. "I don't want you to think I don't love her, because I do. And I am sorry for her beyond words. But I cannot bear to associate her with that man. I do not trust him. How is that he has contrived to keep out of prison? Why was he never sent to Siberia? He's been in and out of Russia a dozen times during the last twenty years while *Mamotschka* was eating her heart out in that foul dungeon at Schlusselfburg."

"Sssssh," said Frau Ursula, as if she were quieting a child. "Don't insinuate things you cannot substantiate, Guido. He's not as bad as all that."

"Oh, I hate him," said Guido again. "I wish he hadn't come. For *Mamotschka's* sake."

He took a book and sat down to read. He half-expected that *Mamotschka* would call him. But the evening wore on and no summons came for him. Apparently Varvara Alexandrovna and her cousin were engrossed in reminiscences and in the perennially fascinating subject of Guido's destiny. Hauser returned at half past ten and was informed of the visitor who had arrived during his absence. If anything, he hated Vasalov even more than Guido did. As was natural, considering the important part Vasalov had played in the estrangement between Hauser and Hauser's wife.

"I wonder what they are talking about," said Guido. "Bet he's trying to put her up to something. Why don't they have me in with them?"

"Don't worry," said Hauser, kindly. "The Russian Revolution is an accomplished fact, so your mother cannot possibly come to new harm."

"Well, I wish I knew what they are talking about," Guido grumbled.

"Why don't you go in?" Hauser asked. "Surely, a son has the right to go to his mother at all times."

"Yes, to his mother!" Guido rose and kissed Frau Ursula's cheek.

Hauser and his wife exchanged glances. Hauser's eyes rested upon the young man with friendly intentness.

"Why don't you prepare some refreshments?" he asked his wife. "Guido can take them in. That will give him an excuse——"

"But neither *Mamotschka* nor the Prince ever eat anything between meals," Frau Ursula objected.

"What's the odds," said Hauser, and Guido echoed:

"Yes, Mother, what's the odds," adding, "if they won't eat, they will at least drink tea."

Frau Ursula accordingly prepared some lettuce sandwiches and tea, and Guido, thus equipped with a legitimate excuse for presenting himself at Varvara Alexandrovna's door, tapped against it with one hand while nervously balancing the tray with his other.

Vasalov opened the door.

"I have brought some tea for you," said Guido, feeling very much of an intruder.

"Oh, that is very thoughtful."

Vasalov stepped aside, and Guido walked into the room apprehensively, swinging the heavy tray between his two hands, and wondering how butlers and maids managed such things without slopping liquid things all over. If the world was to continue servantless someone would have to invent solidified tea and milk for the benefit of amateur butlers like himself.

But then, he reflected, he was not really an amateur butler, he was an interloper.

"Thank you, my son," said Varvara Alexandrovna.

"Sit down and join us, will you not? I have been telling Dmitri Stepanovich of your kindness to me."

All Guido's incipient anger melted away.

"There can be no talk of kindness between mother and son, *Mamotschka*," he said, gallantly kissing her hand.

Varvara Alexandrovna's eyes wandered from Guido to Vasalov. "You see," her eyes said, "how adorable my boy is."

Guido, reassured, brought a small table into the middle of the room, and set the tea-things upon it.

"*Mamotschka*," he said, "will you pour the tea?"

Varvara Alexandrovna poured the tea.

"There are only two cups," she said.

"I am not taking any," said Guido. "I do not drink tea."

"Then you are not a good Russian," said Vasalov.

The remark was an unfortunate one. Guido was about to flare up, when he caught Vasalov's eye. There was in Vasalov's look something which checked Guido's anger. He said, very quietly:

"I do not aspire to be a good Russian, Dmitri Stepanovich. I aspire to be a good American."

"So your mother has been telling me," Vasalov retorted, smoothly.

Guido's sense of annoyance returned, and yet Vasalov's tone had not been offensive in any way. Whatever implication was intended by his words was not plain. Guido, delicately baffled, inquired:

"Is my kinsman displeased?"

"Displeased?" Vasalov weighed the word carefully. "No, Guido Guidovich, I am not displeased. The statements which you made to your mother, and which she repeated to me, amazed me. They were so unexpected and—so convincing."

"Convincing?" Guido ejaculated.

"Convincing, yes. You have matured greatly in the short time since I saw you last. You were a boy then, you are now a man. That you have developed along unexpected lines does not trouble me. The Synthesis was bound to be different from anything we had anticipated, from anything we were capable of anticipating. I feel, overwhelm-

ingly, that while we have accomplished a revolution, you may accomplish reconstruction."

Guido stared. Was he never to hear the last of his Destiny? And after all he had said to his mother? He did not become angry, but said, quietly:

"I hoped that I had effectually laid the specter of my Destiny. It seems that I was mistaken. Let me tell you, Dmitri Stepanovich, that if you continue to cherish the fantastic hopes which cluster about the Synthesis, you are doomed to cruel disappointment."

Varvara Alexandrovna and Dmitri Stepanovich exchanged significant glances.

"We will pursue the subject no further," said *Mamotschka*, "we do not wish to irritate you. I have something to tell you which will interest you. Dmitri Stepanovich sails a week from to-day, and I have decided to accompany him."

Here was news indeed.

"Not really?" Guido straightened up in his chair. "Not really, *Mamotschka*."

"Russia, in her crisis, in her hour of destiny, needs all her sons and daughters," Vasalov said, and his cousin smiled her bright, charming smile in acquiescence.

A terrible pang passed through Guido's heart. Vasalov's presence seemed to paralyze his tongue. All he could do was to sit and stare at the little crumpled broken woman who was voluntarily returning to the land of her bondage to help that land in its crisis.

Presently Guido forgot all about Vasalov. Rising, he knelt down at his mother's side, and entreated her to remain in America. But his supplications had no power to move so sturdily passionate a soul as Varvara Alexandrovna's. Guido plead long and earnestly, but he plead in vain. Finally, realizing the futility of his entreaties, he rose from his knees. His eyes were dim with tears as he moved silently to the door.

"Guido Guidovich!" It was Vasalov's voice that spoke. Guido turned.

"Will you not shake hands with me?"

There was in Vasalov's manner, as he extended his hand to Guido, a certain nobility of bearing. Guido's anger vanished. He realized that he had misjudged this man as

he had once misjudged his mother. He was a fanatic, a conspirator and a spy; but he was not a traitor.

"With all my heart, Dmitri Stepanovich," he said, and took the proffered hand. "Take good care of my mother," he continued, "and when you and she have helped set Russia in order, then bring her back to me."

Later, after Vasalov had gone, Guido went back to his mother's room, ostensibly to remove the tea-tray. He found her sitting with her hands clasped against her bosom, a strange, sweet light in her face.

"My son," she said, "I am glad you came for a little talk before I retire. I feel there are still so many things to say to you and so little time to say them in. No, I do not mean political things. We do not agree in politics. We have thrashed all that out. We will not refer to political matters again.

"Guido Guidovich, I have been reading my Bible. Although I know my New Testament almost by heart, it rests me to read it instead of reciting it.

"What passage do you think my eye fell upon when I opened the Gospels? The passage in which Mary Magdalene poured precious ointment over the Master's feet, and washed them with it, and then dried them with her hair. And the Pharisees rebuked Jesus because so much precious ointment had been wasted which, if sold, would have brought a pretty penny for the poor.

"Why do you think that Jesus permitted the waste of which the Pharisees complained?"

"I confess," Guido replied, smiling, "the passage has always puzzled me. I have no explanation to offer."

"Let me tell you what I think," Varvara Alexandrovna said, eagerly. "I think the Master desired to give this woman the pleasure of knowing that she had done for him, that she had served him. By that little incident were they linked together. He, who opposed pomp and panoply of riches, waived his objections in order to send a fellow-creature away happy."

"That seems very plausible," Guido conceded. He could not imagine where the conversation was leading to.

"The passage has roused my conscience," Varvara Alexandrovna continued in her bright, eager way. "I cannot defer to your mistrust of socialism, because there my prin-

ciples are at stake. But I have been guilty of great narrowness in constructing those principles as rigidly as I have done. It was wrong of me to refuse to get a new gown for your *Mutterchen's* wedding. I cannot undo that, but, if you wish, you may take me over to one of your great stores to-morrow, and buy me any gown you please. And I will wear it as long as I am here, and keep it to wear in memory of you upon especial occasions."

"*Mamotschka!*" Guido was intensely touched. More than all their discussions on politics, more even than the stories she had told him of her childhood and her married life, this incident seemed to bring her into intimate relations with himself. It furnished proof positive of her vibrant, vital humanity. It revealed how exquisitely sensitive she was to the fine shades of human sensibility and not merely to the more obvious currents of life.

Accordingly, on the morrow, the two sallied forth in quest of festive raiment, Guido having narrowly escaped committing the worst blunder of his life. Almost, almost he suggested that Frau Ursula, being a better judge of clothes than himself, should accompany them. He caught back the damning words in time, realizing that this was a secret expedition of which none must know the object until that object was accomplished. It was a high adventure. His mother had made him a tremendous concession, and in the purchase of this one little silk dress greater moral issues were involved than accrue to the entire trousseau of the richest princess in the world.

But he never knew what it cost his mother in more ways than one to go into the palatial department store, to the door of which they drove in a taxi, and walk smilingly through the vast corridors and rooms into which all the wealth of Ormuz and of Ind seemed to have poured itself for the delectation of the American woman; to see heaped upon one chair in a confused, indiscriminate pile suits and dresses and coats the value of which would have fed the peasants of a dozen Russian villages for an entire year. She had a notion that there were no poor, no *real* poor, at least, in America. For manifestly everybody was warmly and comfortably clad. But she knew to repletion the poverty of the Russian peasant which for centuries has been

sapping not so much his physical vitality as his mental energy and health.

What she experienced at first as she passed counter after counter laden with sumptuary articles was a species of horror, a horror very much milder than and yet akin to the horror she had experienced on the road to Siberia, when their sleigh had passed a hundred or more bodies of prisoners who had died on the way of an epidemic. Those frozen bodies had been eloquent witnesses of Russia's corrupt autocracy and bureaucracy and the attendant evils. These jeweled hatpins and mirrors, silver-mounted brushes and combs, diaphanous blouses, Oriental rugs, egg-shell china, cut glass, jewelry, silverware, millinery and underwear dainty enough for any fairy, filled her with violent apprehensions. As a socialist she saw in them a terrible menace to the entire fabric of American society, since extremity of luxury on the one hand begets dire poverty on the other. In spite of her arraignment of the iniquities of American capital, she had not really believed that things were nearly as bad as she had pictured them to be. She perceived from the blatant extravagance which eddied about her in a living processional, as well as in the mute pantomime of the shop, that things were infinitely worse. And when Guido told her that there were in New York hundreds of other shops quite as large and as fine and as versatile as the one through which they were walking, a veritable panic descended upon her.

Guido, whose psychic system, since his nervous breakdown, had learned the trick of registering emotional disturbances proceeding in his proximity, realized that all was not well. He asked his mother if she felt ill. Did she desire to return to the taxi? They could come back another day. She assured him that she was entirely well, and that she was determined to have him buy her the dress.

As she passed the laces, Varvara Alexandrovna's mood suddenly veered. The shop they were in was noted for the perfection of its laces. Varvara Alexandrovna stopped, moved on a pace or two, and stopped again. She needs must examine every bit of handsome lace displayed on the counter or in the show cases. She was enchanted with a Duchess lace scarf in écru, and Guido offered to buy it for her. To his amazement she did not demur. It was

apparent that having plunged into the demoralizing waters of luxury, she was determined to be a good sport and not spoil her boy's day.

At the artificial flower counter she stopped again. She had never seen a display to equal it, she said, and this time she asked Guido to buy her a camelia. It was her favorite flower, she said, and she had not seen one in thirty years. Guido had not suspected that she cared for flowers, and he cursed his stupidity. She had only six more days to spend in America, but that evening he left an order with his florist to send her a handsome sheaf of flowers every morning: Lady Blessington roses for the first day, camelias for the second, violets for the third, pink carnations for the fourth, sweet peas for the fifth and forget-me-nots for the sixth and last day. He was determined to do all in his power to create pleasant memories upon which his mother might draw in the bleak and uncertain future.

But the purchasing of the silk gown was the crowning event of this day of high adventure. The highly rouged and scented saleslady who approached them was inclined to be supercilious after disdainfully examining Varvara Alexandrovna. *Mamotschka* appeared to be oblivious to the saleslady's hauteur, and explained in her sweet, gentle way that she wanted a very plain, simple frock of mauve or taupe silk. Guido followed the saleslady and thrust a five-dollar bill into her hand.

"I wish you would do everything you can to help my mother," he said. His smile, even more than the liberal tip, transformed the saleslady's maner. She became almost offensively pleasant.

It took a very long time to find a gown that suited Varvara Alexandrovna. Guido suggested that they might find something more suitable elsewhere, but the saleslady was persistent and so was *Mamotschka*, and their joint application to the task finally resulted in the unearthing of a frock which Varvara Alexandrovna said might do, and which the saleslady said she was sure would do. A few slight alternations were necessary, and Varvara Alexandrovna and the saleslady withdrew to a dressing-room partitioned off from the main room, and after an eternity *Mamotschka* came tripping forth quite gaily.

"I think," she said, "I really think it is quite pretty." And added that the saleslady had promised to send it the first thing in the morning.

Guido did not believe that the dress would arrive as promised. He was wise in the guiles and the wiles of big shops, and was fully prepared to wait until noon or so, and then telephone for a taxi, and quarrel with Frau Ursula for wanting to go off without lunch, and drive hurriedly to the shop and have a terrific row, politely worded, of course, and hang around for two hours or so until the alterations had been completed.

He was pleasantly disappointed. The saleslady kept her word. The dress arrived before ten o'clock the next morning.

Half an hour later, *Mamotschka's* voice was heard calling from her room:

"Guido, will you come here?"

Frau Ursula, who since her re-marriage gave only her afternoons to Red Cross work, had just come from the kitchen and looked highly disappointed that the summons did not include herself. Guido smiled. He ran back and kissed Frau Ursula affectionately.

"Never mind, *Mutterchen*," he said, consolingly. Then he went to *Mamotschka's* room.

Varvara Alexandrovna had arrayed herself in her new dress and Guido's discriminating eye saw at a glance that she had dressed with care. When he entered, she was still standing before the mirror, alertly searching for gaping spaces between collar and neck-band, for an unfastened snapper or a puckered sleeve.

She turned quickly when Guido entered.

"Well," she said, with her charming, vivacious smile. "how do you find your mother? Do I look much improved?"

"You look too sweet for anything," said Guido, breaking from the habitual Russian into English, and purposely using the feminine superlative.

And indeed, the change in Varvara Alexandrovna's appearance was almost beyond words. The unwholesome bluish white hue had long since disappeared. Excitement had brought a faint tinge of pink to her cheeks. She had, shortly after leaving Dr. Koenig's house, changed her mode

of doing up her hair—whether at Frau Ursula's suggestion or upon her own initiative Guido did not know. But she now wore her hair slightly fluffed up—in simple pompadour fashion—and the snowy-white drift above the low, well-modeled forehead formed a striking contrast to the wonderful dark orbs from which still glowed all the enthusiasm and fire of youthful hopes and aspirations. The small-pox marks remained, of course. But—such is the power of love—Guido had long since ceased to perceive them.

Certainly he did not perceive them now.

"*Mamotschka*," he whispered, "you are lovely, lovely."

She had thrown the écru scarf of lace over her shoulders, and its soft shimmer of interweaving light and shade softened both the color and the severe lines of the mauve silk. For the first time the resemblance between herself and her youthful portrait stood out clear-limned and well-defined.

"Guido Guidovich," said Varvara Alexandrovna, surveying herself critically, "how ashamed you must have been of me."

"Ashamed? No," said Guido.

"You are right. You are too fine to be ashamed of anyone, least of all your mother—but, how it must have hurt you to see me looking so shabby and so poor."

For the world of him Guido could not disavow the sentiment which had taxed his powers of dissimulation to the uttermost. It would have been kindness to lie, but he could not utter the untruth which courtesy bade him utter.

His mother looked at him shrewdly.

"I have a confession to make to you," she said, with a solemnity in which there was almost the directness and the simplicity of childhood. "I was not nearly as averse to owning a silk dress as I wanted you to believe. The truth is I was as anxious for a pretty gown as any woman that ever lived. I thought all yearnings after the frivolous side of life were dead within me, but when I saw your *Mutterchen*, always so well dressed and so perfectly groomed and yet withal so kind and good and charitable, a myriad of strange sensations and cravings which I had all but forgotten came over me. I think it was principally because I saw how you admired her, in addition to loving her, that

I wanted a pretty gown so badly. You see, my son, it is far sweeter to be admired than to be pitied."

"*Mamotschka!*"

"Yes, my dear. And so your seemingly unworldly *Mamotschka* had to fight the battle against vanity all over again; and just when the frivolous beast lay slain once more—as I thought—you began coaxing and wheedling me to buy a new dress."

"Poor *Mamotschka*," said Guido, between laughter and tears.

"You must know—I was very vain in my young days, before I saw the great light. And it was the hardest of all worldly passions to deal with."

"You had a right to be vain, *Mamotschka*. You were so lovely as a girl, and you are lovely now, too."

"You must not flatter me. There are the scars——"

"I never see them now," Guido cried.

A lovely color suffused *Mamotschka's* cheeks.

"That is because you love me," she said. "But others do see them. No, decidedly, you must not flatter me. A vain young girl is bad enough, but a vain old woman is ridiculous. When I was a child there was an old Duchess whom my sisters and I were sometimes taken to see, and every time we visited her she told us how many admirers she had had in her youth; how one had died of a broken heart because she would not have him, how the second one had fought a duel with the third, how the fourth had blown his brains out. Ridiculous! Every woman has her little triumphs. Why, when I was only fourteen, a Prince Tschekolov, a very handsome rich young man——" she broke off. "You see," she said, "what folly you and your silk dress are inveigling me into. I was about to be as indiscreet as the Duchess."

The last week passed only too quickly. Varvara Alexandrovna had made many friends, brief as her visit had been, and all were anxious for a few last words with the Princess Vasalov. No one seemed to remember that her name was really Madame von Estritz.

Mornings Guido's mother denied herself to everyone. She wanted a few hours alone every day with her son, and as they strolled in the park or sat in a sheltered spot in the garden, the new intimacy between them waxed and thrived.

On the evening before the steamer sailed, Guido sat with his mother until the small hours of the morning, trying to prevail upon her, at the eleventh hour, to change her plans and remain with him. But pliable as *Mamotschka* had shown herself to be in other matters, she was unyielding in this respect.

When they parted at the dock in the morning, she said: "My boy, I do not know why this should be so—but I feel a deep gratitude that you have decided to remain here for the present. I feel that it is for the best."

She expressed a wish that they should not wait to see the steamer go out. She felt somewhat unnerved, she said, and preferred to go to her cabin at once and rest there until the steamer had cleared the pier.

Guido took her to her cabin and remained there with her until the first bell rang. The parting was even harder than he had anticipated. Both made valiant efforts to speak, usually at the same time, and invariably failed. Finally they kissed each other, and without a word Guido left her.

On deck he ran into Vasalov. They shook hands warmly.

"*Bon voyage*, Dmitri Stepanovich," said Guido.

"And good luck to you, Guido Guidovich."

The deckmaster called to Guido to make haste. The bridge was about to be lowered. Guido ran down it with the scurrying speed of a squirrel, and hurled himself upon the pier barely a half-second before the bridge was dragged away.

So it was over. He stood staring stupidly at the steamer. It was over. The Russian woman had come—*Mamotschka* was going. What a difference in the two portraits!

With a half-stifled sob he turned and climbed into the taxicab where Elschen, Frau Ursula and Dr. Koenig were waiting for him.

CHAPTER XX

FOR the past month Guido had presented himself regularly every Monday evening at Dr. Erdman's, only to be told after being thumped and thwacked most untenderly in various, supposedly subnormal parts of his anatomy, "Come again next week. Not fit enough yet to enlist."

On the Monday following the Tuesday of his mother departure, Guido entered Dr. Erdman's office with a swagger, and remarked breezily:

"If you don't say I'm fit to-day, I'll take it you are just holding back to oblige the mater. So if you don't want to be shown up as a medical fakir, better put the right glasses on and assure me I am the husky I am."

Dr. Erdman smiled appreciatively. Guido's slang was a labored acquisition, not a natural endowment.

"I believe I shall find you fit to-day," Dr. Erdman said, adjusting the stethoscope. "You look in fine trim." But after sounding Guido's heart, he said, as he pulled the stethoscope away:

"What have you been up to? You look well, but your heart is more jumpy than last week."

"I've been up to nothing, Doc," said Guido, "and my heart is as good as yours."

"Better. My wife says you have the best heart in the world," the doctor replied, laughing.

Guido grunted.

"Look here, is my heart really as punk as you say?"

"Well, it's fluttery. And in your place I wouldn't risk failing in the aviation tests, as you undoubtedly will, if you go up to-morrow. You mother left last week, didn't she?"

"Yes."

"That's it, then," said Dr. Erdman, decisively. "Don't look so unhappy. Physically you are as sound as a bell. Who would have thought it, even five years ago? It's nothing at all but your nerves, and that will pass."

"Nothing but my nerves," said Guido, laughing derisively. "Oh, hang it all," he concluded.

"Go and see my wife," said Dr. Erdman, pushing Guido to the door. "She hasn't seen you in a blue moon."

But Mrs. Erdman had gone out to attend to an errand or two, the maid informed him, and as it was almost supper-time, Guido did not wait for her.

Frau Ursula and Hauser were at the table when Guido reached home. Frau Ursula apologized to Guido for not waiting for him, saying that her husband was anxious to get back to the store. She had kept his dinner hot over boiling water and hoped it would be all right. Guido said he was sure it would and began eating in silence.

"Well?" Hauser asked.

"Not fit yet," Guido replied. "It's that beastly heart of mine. At least that's what Dr. Erdman said. I told him he was a confounded fakir."

"Guido!" Frau Ursula was scandalized.

"Well, I did. So there."

Hauser discreetly turned the conversation into a different channel. He had almost finished his dinner, and left the house soon afterwards. Ten minutes later he let himself in with his latchkey, and came into the dining-room a late extra in his hand.

The table had been cleared, and Frau Ursula sat at one side with her knitting, Guido on the other, reading "David Copperfield" for the dozenth time. He did not look up as Hauser entered.

Hauser, his eyes fixed cautiously on Guido, walked around the table to his wife. He made a gesture warning her against showing sudden emotion, and then laid the extra on the table before her. But the two-inch headlines fairly screamed at one, and Frau Ursula was so profoundly moved that an involuntary cry escaped her. Guido looked up from his book. She had the presence of mind to drop her knitting across the paper.

"What's the matter now?" he demanded, sharply. He glanced from Hauser to Frau Ursula, and then back again to Hauser. Something, it was easy to see, was radically wrong.

Guido pushed his chair back from the table and rose to his feet.

"Is it Stan?" he said. "Has Stan been killed, too?"

"Not Stan——" Frau Ursula's voice was thin with fright and horror.

"Then—*Mamotschka!*" It was not a question. It was a statement.

Guido reached across the table and drew the newspaper from under Frau Ursula's knitting. As he read, he had the sensation of absorbing at first hand, as an eye-witness, the details of the horrible tragedy of which *Mamotschka* had been one of many hundred victims.

The Norwegian vessel on which she had sailed had been torpedoed near the British coast. Only two score passengers had been saved out of the four hundred souls that had sailed from New York six days earlier. Among the dead, the report stated, were the famous Russian revolutionists, Prince Vasalov and his cousin Princess Vasalov.

The sea had not been heavy and the day was bright and clear, so that the passengers and the crew could easily have made the life-boats, if the submarine had not begun shelling the decks on which the men, women and children stood huddled together, waiting their turn to enter the frail cockle-shells which might yet bear them to safety. One life-boat, filled with women and children, had actually gotten away from the sinking vessel. The submarine had then trained its gun upon the life-boat, and sent volley after volley into the frail, overloaded craft. Five minutes later the boat with its sickening mass of splintered wood and torn and mangled human flesh had sunk.

To add to the horror, the sinking vessel, which had begun listing heavily to port, suddenly blew up, spilling all who remained on deck, into the water. The handful of survivors, who had been picked up by a British trawler, said they were certain that the submarine had not dispatched a second torpedo. As the vessel contained no ammunition, the only inference to draw was that the German secret service in New York had placed one of the bombs, to which the Germans themselves, with ghoulish facetiousness, referred as "cigars," in the coal bunkers.

Guido read no more. He flung the paper down upon the table and left the room.

"Better go after him," said Hauser. "I'll be right here if you want me."

Guido did not go to his own room. Mechanically he went to the room which *Mamotschka* had occupied. Mechanically he lit the gas, and then stood staring around him with a sense of newness and unfamiliarity.

Odd that not one of them had thought of the possibility of this ending to that tragic life! Perhaps the others had thought of it. He hadn't. Why had he let her go? He should have found a way, means, arguments to keep her safely at home. He felt that he had not exerted himself sufficiently. He should not have entreated and supplicated, he should have commanded and compelled. He felt, with the bitterness of black remorse, that in some way he had failed lamentably in his filial duty.

The shadows of the room seemed to mock him.

"I called her 'the Russian woman,'" he said. "I called her an assassin. I despised and hated her. And when I first saw her my first impression was that of repugnance, and now I let her go to her death."

He tried to picture the gruesome tragedy that had taken place barely twenty miles from the British coast, not much further away from land and safety than Rockaway was from New York. Had she been in the life-boat which the Huns had turned into a slaughter-pen before it went down? Or had she been on deck, when the listing vessel had crashed up into the air, spilling its human cargo from decks made slippery by sea-water and slimy by blood, into the boiling sea, while its dismembered hull maimed and crippled and killed the abject human flotsam and jetsam which it had first cast forth, as if suddenly endowed with a malignancy akin to that of the human sharks who had inaugurated this masterpiece of modern piracy?

Surely, since Nero's time, when perverts of both sexes had joyously applauded while lions tore to pieces the still quivering living flesh of men and women, and justified their joy because their victims were followers of a despised religious faith, the human species had not degenerated to such a hateful depth.

"The beasts," he cried, suddenly, beating his hands together, "the beasts, the unspeakable abominable hounds."

What was the use of calling names? Leave that to the women. Why wasn't he at the front, helping to eliminate as many as possible of these creatures in human form into

whom, by the devil's own alchemy, the souls of wolves, jackals and coyotes had become infused?

Because he had nerves. Nerves!

He fumed about the room in impotent fury.

An echo of his normal self reminded him of his own erstwhile contention that not all Germans are bad.

He turned upon himself, furiously.

"They are *all* bad," he said, "every one of them. Every man, woman and child in Germany who approves of this sort of thing is bad. If they approve of it they are as deep-dyed in blood-guilt as the gunner of that submarine himself.

"And that applies also to every German sympathizer on this side of the Atlantic."

Vindictiveness took possession of him. Why should all these criminals—or were German sympathizers any better than criminals—be permitted at large? England had promptly clapped all Germans into detention camps, where they belonged; no, they did not belong in detention camps, they belonged in the electric chair. Men had been electrocuted for crimes which made connivance in German frightfulness seem sweet and fair as a flowering shrub.

His saner self intervened.

"America's policy is one of leniency, of clemency," it said. "America has thriven and prospered on that policy because it is humane. America did not execute Vallandigham—she merely banished him. America will send to Ellis Island Germans who are suspected of actively co-operating with the Fatherland, and to Atlanta those who have committed criminal acts. Mere sympathizers she will leave at large, unless they mouth it too obstreperously. America has gone into the War because the issue at stake is a moral issue, because she condemns a policy of intimidation, because democracy itself is threatened. And because a moral issue is at stake, America will triumph over 'invincible' Germany, and, that being a foregone conclusion, she sees no necessity for hounding and making miserable the average German-American who is leading a decent, useful private life and whose political affiliations are the outcome not of inherent viciousness but of the German system of deliberately fostering racial egoism, without which

she would not have had the support of her people in this war of wars."

But ratiocination could not make the murder of his mother undone.

He wrung his hands in mute agony, and yet, by some curious twist of the mind, it seemed to him that he was not suffering at all. His callousness appalled him. He told himself that the only effect that the death of his mother had had upon him was to stimulate his imagination. His heart remained untouched.

"That," he said, with bitterness incredible, "is because I have no heart."

He was quite certain that he had no heart in the emotional sense. He remembered that *Mamotschka* had said to him just before they parted, "I am thankful that you have decided to remain here for the present. I feel it is for the best."

She had said that because subconsciously she had had a premonition of the tragedy which was to engulf her. She had not brought that tragedy across the threshold of consciousness, but it had brushed up sharply against her love of her son through some delicate psychic process, and had translated itself into a conviction, which had nothing to do with any known rational process, that it was well that her son was not to cross the ocean with her.

"If I had loved her as much as she loved me," he said, with withering self-scorn, "I would have had the same premonition in regard to her."

He sank into an abyss of remorse and self-detestation. Almost he felt as if he were directly responsible for her death.

Suddenly his ability to think clearly, ceased. He was conscious only of a terrible, consuming hatred for all things German.

All the distaste he felt for killing a human being, though an enemy, vanished. He wished that he were in the thick of the fray now. He wondered whether instead of waiting to offer himself as an airman, it would not be better to enlist at once in the Army. His lips narrowed to a thin, cruel line. There must be joy unimagined, he thought, in closing in a hand to hand scuffle with one of those fiends—to feel your own brain and brawn gradually overcoming

the muscle and the brain of your foe. The bayonet had always filled him with a sick feeling of disgust. He felt now that he could use it, could use it to excellent purpose.

His thoughts harked back to the tragedy that had caused this frenzy of hatred in him. The misery, the unutterable misery of it! And again there flashed before his eyes a vision of the tragedy at sea. He saw every detail clearly. The trim, trig Norwegian, hideously disfigured by camouflaging smears of paint as many-hued as Joseph's coat, forging ahead under full steam, marked as a victim and pursued by the crew of the submarine, half-sick with the rigors of perpetual confinement in their engine of destruction and with the physical recoil of foul and murderous thoughts. Their dehumanized mentalities, long since incapacitated by the carouse of murder, by the orgy of crime upon which their country had embarked, from perceiving the difference between honest battle and cold-blooded assassination, saw in the killing of civilians whether at sea or on land nothing but "military necessity." Whatever impetus toward right thinking, derived from ancestors of the pre-Bismarckian era, may have persisted at first, had long since been inhibited by the "iron" discipline of the Navy, which is the boast of every good German. Now they frankly lusted to kill, lusted to speed the torpedo on its mad career of destruction, principally, perhaps, for the sake of the clear air of the sea vouchsafed them only upon emergence from the ocean of which their piratical exploits had made a vast graveyard.

One word entailed in this train of thought rebounded into acute consciousness. Assassination! Was it fair to condemn the Germans so ruthlessly for being the assassins they undoubtedly were when others, among them she whom he was mourning, had practiced the same dismal immorality, and were exonerated by the world?

His heart—the heart which he had declined to believe he possessed a few moments earlier—cried out aloud at this, insisting tumultuously that Varvara Alexandrovna had practiced terrorism only because there was absolutely no other weapon to use. The argument recoiled upon itself. Was not that precisely the same argument for *Schrecklichkeit* which the Germans were advancing—that there was

nothing that would accomplish what they were seeking to accomplish excepting terrorism?

Why then, inexorable logic demanded, do you lament the one as a victim and execrate the turpitude of the other?

Guido caught at his throat and loosened his collar. He had the sensation of strangling. His breath came in great gasps, as if he were panting after a hard run. He told himself that he must go mad if he did not cling hard—cling hard to what? He could not say. His brow was wet with cold perspiration.

Then he knew that he was suffering—that he was suffering greatly.

He renewed his arguments in behalf of Varvara Alexandrovna. At all costs he must exculpate her entirely. She had used terrorism as a weapon against enslavement, while the Germans were using it in their effort to enslave the entire world.

That should have exonerated his mother completely, but he perceived presently that what he was really trying to do was not merely to justify his mother but to extol her. But his conscience refused to be trafficked with. Her heroism, her fortitude, her sincerity and honorable desires, her love for humanity, all these qualities he might and did applaud. But he could not—he simply could not—applaud her methods.

And suddenly all this hair-splitting and argumentation seemed inexpressibly cheap and tawdry. His entire sense of being was merged in a great throbbing monotone of elemental pain.

"I loved her, I loved her so," he said to himself. And immediately the thought returned that he had not loved her enough, or he would not have let her go to her death.

It was an invidious circle in which his thoughts chased hard upon one another's heels.

All the while Frau Ursula was standing outside the door, every nerve concentrated upon the enormous endeavor to hear something so insubstantial as the beating of the wings of thought through a well-timbered door. She was afraid to enter unbidden. Several times she had felt herself pushed away out of the immediate pale of Guido's inmost self, once when he had refused to be questioned in regard to his engagement, and again when he had gone off with

Mamotschka to buy the silk dress without telling Frau Ursula a word about it. She understood, of course, what his motive had been upon that occasion in not consulting her—or seeming to consult her—but she felt that he might have given her a vague hint—a suggestion before the dress had become an accomplished fact.

So she stood there, throat and chest aching with the effort she was making to restrain her own respiration so that she might hear his. She heard him moan once or twice, like a person in severe physical pain. Then there fell a leaden silence more terrible than these half-stifled sounds. She became seriously alarmed. She could bear the suspense and the fear no longer. With resolute caution she opened the door and went in.

He stared at her with eyes that seemed to make of her physical self a translucent veil through which he was peering into some mystery beyond. And he said not a word. He sat as still as death itself.

"Guido," she cried, "*Herzenjunge*, do not hold yourself in like that. *Lass' Dich ein Bischen gehen.*"

He said:

"Although we do not know whether she was drowned, or killed by wreckage, or whether she was shot, we know that she died bravely."

"Yes," said Frau Ursula.

"And because she died bravely," Guido continued, "we may be certain that she was not in that first life-boat that had safely cleared the suction of the sinking vessel only to be shot to slivers."

"Yes," Frau Ursula assented.

"I can imagine," the boy continued, pressing his hands tightly together as if controlling a neuralgic pain, "that she went about among women and children, quieting them, helping them into the boats or staunching the blood of those who had been wounded, and never, never once thinking of herself or her own safety."

"Yes, yes," said Frau Ursula, huskily.

"She was very brave," Guido went on. "I think bravery was the keynote of her character. I cannot imagine anyone being braver than she."

Frau Ursula nodded. Tears dimmed her eyes and sobbed choked her voice.

"There was such a fine quality to her bravery," Guido resumed. "Her bravery was something much finer than mere endurance, it was more than a willingness to endure, more than cheerfulness in endurance—it was, I think, an unostentatious but deeply religious negation of the importance of physical suffering. To her suffering was important only in so far as it refines and humanizes the human race. But above her own suffering her soul soared unheeding and untouched. That is why Schlusselfburg did not drive her insane."

Frau Ursula's tears were falling.

"The thought of her bravery will abide with me always," said Guido. "It carries with it the authority of something—well, scriptural."

Until this moment he had spoken quietly. Now, suddenly, a pain gripped at his vitals, and moved through him like a living thing.

"Why did I not tell her all this," Guido cried, spasmodically. "She wanted my admiration—she wanted it and desired it—and I withheld my homage until now—and now it is too late——"

Frau Ursula came and stood beside him and encircled his shoulders with her arm.

"You must not reproach yourself," she said; "you were adorable in your treatment of her. I was so proud of my boy."

His emotion was eating into the very marrow of his self-control.

"Ah," he cried, "the waste of it, the folly! The shameful, shameless human waste!"

Frau Ursula thought that a mood of expansive sympathy had seized him, and said:

"Almost five hundred lives wiped out!"

"Ah!" He was shaken by a gust of that over-evaluation of self without which grief for the loss of the departed would be destitute of its sharpest edge. "I was not thinking of the others. I was thinking of *Mamotschka*, of her wasted, futile life. Her brief married life was almost as full of unhappiness as of happiness. Motherhood brought her the keenest torture which she ever underwent. To see her child in the miasmatic filth of a Russian prison was the only thing that could make that brave soul wince. And—

it has never occurred to me before—the thought of parting from her child must have been a tremendous pain. Until now I have only thought of your nobility, *Mutterchen*, in taking to your heart that puny, sickly, vermin-covered child—but there was a fine nobility also in her faith in you—in handing over to you her child like that——”

He stopped, entirely overcome by the tumult of retrospective pity that was stirring in his veins. To steady himself he rose and strode about the room. Suddenly, before the bureau, he halted abruptly. It was the precise spot where Varvara Alexandrovna had stood on the day when she had arrayed herself in the silk dress.

The recollection of the lighter, feminine side of *Mamotschka's* character, with the renewed and intensified implication of all the niceties and refinements and complexities of life which she had missed, wrenched him with a violence that seemed to rend body and soul asunder. It broke to atoms the self-restraint to which he had been clinging so desperately.

All of a sudden, he went completely to pieces. He fell on his knees and wept. The shattering sobs and harsh tears which grief wrings from men shook him.

And Frau Ursula, her sheltering arms about him, waiting for the storm to pass, was satisfied to have it so. She had all a woman's faith in the remedial and restorative power of tears.

CHAPTER XXI

ANOTHER fortnight elapsed before Guido was pronounced well enough by Dr. Erdman to present himself for the aviation tests. He passed the grilling mental and physical examinations and was told that his two and a half years' work as a student of technology would prove invaluable. Highly elated, he made the round of his friends to apprise them of his good luck in having been accepted for the air service.

He stopped first at the Red Cross Work Rooms to tell Frau Ursula. She gave him a smile holding the contradictory qualities of joy and pain.

"It is well," she said, simply.

Guido then walked back to Bismarck Street, and sought out the large rambling semi-magnificent, semi-shabby house at the unfashionable end of Anasquait's Fifth Avenue, which had been a sort of secondary home to him all his life.

Dr. Koenig opened the door himself and led the way to the comfortable study at the back of the house where he spent most of his waking hours.

"Great news, *Herr Doktor*," said Guido. "I'm going to be an airman all right. They've accepted me."

"Great news!" the Doctor exclaimed. "Bah," he barked out angrily. "All aviators are killed sooner or later. Great news, indeed! Your Destiny will be finished before it has ever begun."

"That's a real nice neighborly, cheerful view to take of it," said Guido, pulling up his chair beside the Doctor's.

"Bah," barked the old man again. "Bah."

"Oh, come, come," said Guido. "Seems to me I've heard something of the doings way back in the year '48. Seems to me Grossvater Geddes and Grossvater von Estritz and you, too, *Opapa* Koenig, had your fingers in the pie in those days."

"Bah," Dr. Koenig said for the third time, but it was a

very mild and ineffectual "Bah" compared with its predecessors. A smile had crept into the corners of his mouth. Guido's assumption of an intimacy which had never been practiced between them, delighted his secret heart all the more because the lad had singled him out as the recipient of the more acutely intimate and endearing version of the orthodox "*Grossvater*"; for "*Opapa*" bears just that subtle significance of good comradeship and frank friendliness in German, that "granddaddy," as opposed to "grandfather," holds in English.

"Well, have it your way," he said. "I wouldn't want to see you out of the fray." And after a moment, he added, "It is particularly fitting that you should go—you and all German-Americans who are loyal sons of America and of democracy, for in fighting Imperial Germany you are fighting for the real Germany, the Germany that lies hidden and obscured and befouled in the grime of Junkerism and Kaiserism and Kultur. Germany," he continued, "Germany of the Germans—the real Germans, who are a mild, in-offensive, politically misinformed people, will one day thank America or having come into the War, for breathing fresh life and fresh hope into the Allied forces and saving the day for them, for America, for democracy, and for Germany, too.

"For autocracy in Germany is hydra-headed. If the one head of the monster were to continue to wax and thrive, the other monster, by responsive reaction, would thrive and wax strong also, and when the time should have become ripe, they would seek to devour each other, and the process would so demoralize and devitalize the German people that Germany would then indeed be undone for ages to come. For the name of the second head of the monster, which is present always wherever autocracy holds undisputed sway, is socialism.

"Therefore I predict that the German people, when their angle of vision shall have been corrected after the war is over, will thank America, yes, thank her, for doing what she will by that time will have done.

"There was a time," he went on, "when I had lost all faith in my own race. It may seem strange to you that I should feel faith now when the name 'German' has become a stench in men's nostrils. But there is to me an

infinite pathos in the childlike faith with which the German people regard their government, the Military Staff, the Kaiser, the entire devilish machine that is responsible for the catastrophe. And there is to me also something quite indescribably ghastly in the thought that any state should have power not merely to enslave the bodies of its citizens, but to enslave and to impale their souls as well."

He was terribly agitated, he was tremendously in earnest.

"Germany's real crime," he cried, "is the crime against the Holy Ghost, the crime of having been untrue to herself! Slowly, gradually, circumspectly, throughout forty long years her government has dropped the slow poison into her people's soul—the poison of overweening race-pride, of envy, of national fear, of evil-mindedness! The soul of Germany to-day is devitalized and vitiated by this invidious process of slow poisoning. She needs purgation by blood, purgation by defeat, purgation by repentance. The first two purges await her inevitably—but no extraneous force, no foreign power no matter how well-intentioned, can administer the third and the most important purge. Unless she takes that physic of her own account she will be damned—eternally, inevitably, irretrievably damned."

The old man had spoken with frightful intensity.

Guido, remembering Grossvater Geddes' tragic end, tried to divert him. But Dr. Koenig refused to be diverted. He was too full of his subject.

"What our own government is about I do not know," he broke out anew. "Will they continue to let every German fire-eater continue to vilify this country so long as they do not blow up bridges and throw bombs? Will they allow a street in an American town—a town which has suddenly become prominent as a port of embarkation—to continue to be known by the name of the man who is responsible for all this devil's tomfoolery of blood and iron?"

"I believe," said Guido, "and I suppose you have heard it, too, that the Mayor is taking up the subject of changing the name of our street from Bismarck to Lincoln Street."

"Well," said Dr. Koenig, grimly, "I hope they will not change it to Lincoln Street. It's an insult to the memory of the greatest American of all to hand him the left-overs

of a Bismarck! Let them change it to anti-Christ, or Machiavelli, or just plain Brimstone or Sulphur."

Guido laughed.

"There is nothing funny about it," the exasperated old man went on. He seized a German newspaper and thrust it in Guido's face.

"This miserable *Kaeseblaettchen*," he roared, "has the blackguardly impudence to denounce the projected change as narrow-minded! Damn it!" he roared, "damn it!" and he tore it up and stuffed it into the waste-paper basket. "What in heaven's name is our government about?"

"Oh, our government knows its business," said Guido. "In the end you will see it is doing right to show clemency wherever it can."

Dr. Koenig continued to grumble. He disapproved of the Administration, and the President's tardy declaration of war had failed to assuage his sense of aggrievement, while the government's leniency mightily displeased and alarmed the old Republican.

Guido next went to the parsonage. He went there with a heavy heart. He expected an unpleasant half of an hour. Elschen disapproved of him continually these days, and did not hesitate to voice her disapproval, apparently thinking it the duty of a future wife to mete out wholesale admonishment.

Like Dobronov, she had become an uncompromising socialist, and she condemned Guido unstintingly for his apostasy. Guido, in considering the result of his own teachings of the perfervid days when he had acclaimed socialism as the Religion of Humanity, felt humiliated and sick at heart. He had introduced Elschen and Dobronov to this dangerous heresy, and had been instrumental in bringing them into the socialistic fold, but he had been unable to reverse the process as he had reversed it in himself. He reminded himself continually that the heterodoxy of one age is the orthodoxy of another. That, of course, had been abundantly true of democracy, but the more he thought about it the less he could see in socialism triumphant anything but a turning back of the wheels of progress.

Elschen, on being apprized of Guido's enlistment said in a sweet, childish tone that contrasted oddly with her words:

"It is a dreadful thing to do, Guido. You must forgive me for being frank. In the first place, you are a traitor to your race in enlisting to fight against Germany. In the second place, Germany is right and even if you were not a German you ought to be honest enough to admit the justice of Germany's cause."

Guido thought:

"Why in heaven's name doesn't she offer to release me?"

Elschen, counting her points by tapping the pink forefinger of her right hand against the palm of her left, continued:

"In the third place, there is pacifism, and you ought to be man enough to embrace and practice it."

"Look here, Elschen," ignoring Elschen's third point completely. "If you had lived at the time of the Revolution would you have remained true to the Crown or would you have espoused the cause of the Americans?"

"Can you ask?" Elschen demanded, hotly. "Of course I would have been 'against' England."

"Then," said Guido, "why blame me? Englishmen of American birth fought Englishman of English birth in those days. What's wrong then with a Russo-German-American fighting Germany?"

Elschen grew very red and looked the wrath which her diction was too constricted to voice.

"Also," said Guido, "if your pacifism is sincere, how do you manage to exonerate Germany completely, and even to sympathize with her, while blaming her enemies?"

"Because Germany is defending herself," Elschen retorted, indignantly. "Ah, if you had a German heart you would understand."

"I have always been under the impression," said Guido, with gentle scorn, "that understanding is a function of the reason and feeling a function of the heart. Apparently I was mistaken."

Elschen's pretty face puckered with annoyance into pink and white dimples. She took up her knitting, which, in her excitement, had slipped from her hands. Like many another German sympathizer, Elschen, impelled by heaven-only knows what motive, was industriously knitting for the American Red Cross since America's entry into the War.

Elschen gathered her feeble resources together for a renewed attack.

"If you had wanted to do what is right, you would have gone back to Russia with your mother to take up her noble work. Of course, I cannot now regret that you didn't go, but there is really no excuse for you not going to Russia ultimately to preach social democracy as she wished you to do."

Elschen's didactic petulance usually had no effect whatever upon Guido, but this was really rather crass. *Mamotschka's* death was still very recent, and it left a wound that bled freely at the slightest touch. Elschen's tactless and—so it seemed to Guido—heartless words gave Guido the sense of a nail driven through raw flesh. His thoughts were thrown into violent disturbance. It seemed to him that he was saying one thing and thinking another at the same time.

He said:

"You will have to understand, Elschen, that in matters of conscience I allow no one to advise me or to dictate to me. No one. That's flat."

He thought:

"Now, pray heaven, she'll jilt me!"

It is doubtful, however, whether Guido's expectations would have been realized, even if the *Herr Pastor* had not happened to enter the room at this inauspicious moment. Probably, alone with Guido, Elschen would simply have continued to scold him. She was one of those women who all their lives remain children in heart and in mind. They have no sense of their own arrested mental development and spiritual insufficiency, and tranquilly pursue their way through life, becoming less and less charitable and more and more censorious of others, never suspecting that they themselves are legitimate objects of pity and scorn. Guido plainly saw that the less beautiful aspects of Elschen's character were becoming more and more pronounced, and were crystallizing with amazing rapidity into sharp unloveliness. This did not blind him to her sterling worth within a restricted sphere. Honest she was withal, kind to those whom she approved of, and capable of self-sacrificing devotion for those whom she loved, as Guido had had ample

occasion to realize during a fortnight in which Pastor Marlow had been crippled with lumbago.

Like all women of weak mentality, she gloried in masculine masterfulness. Guido, masterful, was Guido thrice glorified. For of the fact that she loved him still, and very deeply at that, there could be no doubt.

Pastor Marlow, on entering the room and perceiving that the ambrosial harmony which is supposed to be the habitual medium of lovers had been somewhat disturbed, demanded to be told what was the matter. The excellent man, as we know, had entertained grave doubts for a long time as to the why and wherefore of his daughter's engagement. He asked to be told what had happened.

"Guido has enlisted," Elschen replied, in her childish staccato. "He is going to be an American airman."

"Well, that is splendid of Guido, I think," the *Herr Pastor* cried, greatly to Guido's astonishment. He was very evidently sincere in applauding Guido's action, and Guido said:

"You are very kind to say so. Elschen disapproves violently. Won't you try to convince her that I am doing the right thing?"

Pastor Marlow frowned.

"I am sorry to say," he replied, "that my daughter's views and my own are slightly at variance."

"Father has changed his views in regard to the War," said Elschen. "He is now quite pro-American. But I have not changed my views. I do not see how any sincere person can believe and say one thing one day and believe an entirely different thing the next. I am sorry to have to say this to you, Papa, and to you, Guido."

Her meekness was terrible. It was the unyielding, self-sufficient, self-laudatory meekness of the rigid inelastic mind, which sees in perfect consistency the flower of stability, not the weed of stagnation.

"My child," Pastor Marlow said, in a tone so patently patient that it betrayed that he had covered the argumentative ground, which he was about to essay, before, "I think I have fully explained to you why I changed my views about the War."

"Yes, Papa," said Elschen, in a tone of outward obedience and inward rebellion.

With a sigh the Pastor turned to Guido.

"A great change has come over me, Guido," he said, simply. "I will not go into detail. It is a painful thing for a man of my age to have to repudiate the country of his birth. But I feel that I have made a fool of myself, or have been made a fool of, I do not know which. At any rate, there can now be only one country for all of us. I have always been proud of the fact that I did not change my nationality. I regret now that I did not do so. We never know just what feelings are bounded by our hearts until the touchstone of fact and circumstance is applied to them. After the President had declared war, it came to me as a tremendous shock that, now that the blow had fallen, now that it had become necessary to choose between Germany and America, America, and not Germany, was my choice. I have often in the past criticised America and I shall in the future criticise her again. But what I feel overwhelmingly now is this: My disapproval, where I disapprove, is the disapproval which we bestow upon our own, upon those whom we love, to whom we belong and who belong to us, and whom—or which—we wish therefore to see quite perfect.

"After the War is over I hope to become an American citizen in fact as I now as in feeling."

His words were inspired by genuine emotion, and not for a moment did Guido doubt his sincerity. Guido did not even doubt his loyalty for America when, a moment later, he broke out into violent denunciation of England coupled to predictions that "after America has pulled the chestnuts out of the fire for England, England will kick us good and hard in return, you see if she doesn't!" The change from pro-German to "pro-American" which was successfully accomplished by many hyphenates of undoubted integrity in the early days of the war, was almost invariably accompanied by these anglophobic convulsions. The phenomenon was not new to Guido. Nor did it trouble him. There were some labyrinthine intricacies of the Teutonic mind which he had long since ceased to explore. He left the parsonage feeling sick at heart, for he was still a man of plighted troth.

"It can't go on," he said. "It can't. If she doesn't break the engagement, I will have to."

He consulted his watch. It was a little after four, and he decided to call upon the Professor and Mrs. Geddes. He calculated that four o'clock tea, which was a regular function at the Geddes home, would be over by the time he got there.

He found the Professor and Mrs. Geddes sitting as usual in the Professor's study, the tea-wagon at their side. They had not quite finished drinking their tea, or eating their deliciously thin buttered toast, and Guido felt that he had blundered in coming so early, for this hour was, as Janet once called it, "the husband's and wife's hour."

He was not allowed to feel uncomfortable long. Mrs. Geddes, disengaging her hand from her husband's clasp, rose to greet him. There was such sincere kindness in her tone as she said, "So glad to see you, my boy," that he knew he was welcome, indeed.

"Well," said the Professor, shaking hands with him, "when are you coming back to college? You look in fine trim—only another month of it as it is."

"I'm not coming back at all, Professor Geddes," said Guido. "That's what I came here to tell you. I've enlisted. To-day. Aviation."

"Ah!" Mrs. Geddes exclaimed. "Janet will be so pleased."

"Will she?" the Professor remarked, dryly. "In my days young girls were sorry to see their friends go off to war."

"I agree with Mrs. Geddes, sir," said Guido. "Janet will be pleased. I've been a slacker long enough."

"Well, I'm glad you're entirely well again, anyhow," said the Professor, and Mrs. Geddes, remembering that he did not take tea, offered him some cocoa, which he declined.

As Guido sat down beside Mrs. Geddes on the long davenport, he had a strong sense of being among friends the most true and sincere. And, while that fine sincerity was the most obvious note of the friendship which they had continued to show him, in spite of the insidious folly which had culminated in his engagement, there was another, very subtle, precious side to this intimacy of his with the Geddes family which, in Guido's estimation, placed a superlative value upon it. When he was with them he

invariably felt that he was at his best, and by that I do not mean that he shone socially more with the Geddeses than with others, but rather that he felt that the finer shades of his character were being stimulated while the less desirable qualities of heart and mind seemed to shrink away and suffer a sort of moral asphyxiation. This was so, perhaps, because Professor Geddes and his family were accustomed to look for what is best in human nature and not for what is worst, and unconsciously Guido compared these fine friends of his with Egon von Dammer and Erna Gottschalk. These two had habituated themselves to looking for the lower side of human nature, and to base their calculations upon that, and to ignore completely the finer spiritual qualities which exist in all, but which, like every other quality, require cultivation if they are to shine with a bright and steadfast light.

It was, Guido reflected, because Professor Geddes and his wife pursued a diametrically different course that they had not summarily barred him from their home after his engagement. They were taking him on trust. They were showing faith in him. They had been most kind during his illness and after *Mamotschka's* death. And he was intensely grateful to Janet's parents for the indulgence which they had shown him.

He was so deeply stirred by these reflection that, for a moment, he did not trust himself to speak. Professor Geddes and his wife misunderstood his silence. They exchanged glances.

"I can imagine, Guido," said Professor Geddes, "that the desire to avenge your mother's death is at present uppermost in your heart. Will you forgive a man very much older than yourself for venturing to advise you? Do not nurse this feeling of vengefulness. It's not a wholesome feeling. America has a certain task to perform, and it is right and just that honest indignation should kindle in her sons as they set about to do the work in hand. But there is a big difference between the psychology of righteous indignation and the psychology of revenge. The one is among the noblest feelings that can set a human heart aflame, the other among the basest. I need not enlarge on the subject. The two feelings stand in much the same relation to each other as love and lust."

"I think, sir," said Guido, "that a feeling for revenge burned in me for a short time only—a very short time. As you say—revenge is a base emotion. But the tragedy of my mother's murder is with me always. I seldom lose the sense of it. It is curious—there seems photographed upon the retina of my mind a picture of the sinking, listing, exploding vessel which is so clear as if I had seen it with my physical eyes. And I cannot get rid of it. It haunts me. I shall be glad when I am in camp. I want to contribute my iota in helping to end the German iniquity. I want to help to make the world sweet and clean once more."

"Well said, Guido," said the Professor heartily. And Mrs. Geddes, regarding him kindly, said:

"We are expecting Janet to spend the night with us." She spoke in her abrupt, truncated, fluttering way. "She probably will be here by six—in time for dinner—can't you stay? You two will be wanting to compare recent war experiences. Well?"

In vain had the Professor shot Parthian glances at his wife. Janet, after that first hysterical outburst, had never reverted to her heartache or to her disappointment. The Professor, manlike, had taken it for granted that Janet, in prohibiting Guido's presence when she herself was about, had spoken for all time. Mrs. Geddes, wise in the ways of her own sex, and perceiving Janet's latent hostility for all other young men, had drawn her own conclusions. Hence her invitation.

"You're most awfully kind," murmured Guido, his cheeks aflame.

"So," thought the Professor. "He *does* love her. Then, why the mischief——"

"Goodness," thought Mrs. Geddes, "if he blushes like that at sound of her name, what will be the color of my daughter's face at sight of him?" And she left the room abruptly and told the maid that she would answer the bell herself. This would give her a chance to warn Janet that Guido was in the house.

The bell rang shortly afterwards. It was only five o'clock, and Mrs. Geddes did not expect Janet so early. Nor was it Janet who was at the door. It was Wesendonck.

Wesendonck's persistence in continuing to visit them was something of a puzzle to Professor Geddes and his wife. Both suspected that Janet might be the magnet. Janet, intermittently, to Professor Geddes' horror, had shown some disposition to flirt with the doughty Teuton. His wife assuaged his distress by assuring him that Janet was merely taking these means to punish Wesendonck for his outrageous political convictions.

"If she were a man she would probably, before this, have employed physical force in dealing with him," said Mrs. Geddes. "Being a woman she employs her eyes. I leave it to you to say which is the more deadly method."

But whatever Wesendonck's reasons were for coming, he came and continued to come with the same unconcerned frequency whether Janet flirted with him or snubbed him or was away from home.

Mrs. Geddes greeted him civilly, with the merest suspicion of frosty reserve, and led him to the study. She looked slightly malicious, as women will, in announcing to her husband, "Mr. Wesendonck, dear."

Herr Wesendonck, having been offered a cup of tea and having accepted it, gulped it down in a business-like way which said very plainly that time was really much too precious to waste in such futilities, and then plunged into the War without preamble or prelude. As of old, he waded knee-deep into it, ignoring the fact that his hostess and host were Americans and differed radically with him in every particular touching the War.

He began by calling Mr. Wilson a serpent, a snake in the grass, a venomous toad, who had reduced America from her once proud sovereignty to mere vassalage. Americans were no longer freemen. They were vassals of England. Mr. Wilson was an autocrat—a much worse autocrat than the Czar.

"Or the Kaiser?" Guido inquired, gently obtuse.

Herr Wesendonck burst into a guffaw.

The Kaiser an autocrat? That showed, that *just* showed what Americans didn't know. The Kaiser was no autocrat. He had no power at all. As anyone who would take the trouble to read the Constitution of the German Empire could see for himself.

"Your statement is partially true," said Guido. "As

German Emperor Wilhelm is a mere figurehead. As King of Prussia he wields a power the sinister greatness of which has been abundantly proven during the last three years."

"I see you share the popular American delusion that the Kaiser is the arch-malefactor of history?"

"No," said Guido, "I do not think that of him. I think he is too big a fool to be a big criminal. It's through the pressure which the unscrupulous clique about him brought to bear on him that he developed into the dangerous tool he has proven himself to be."

Herr Wesendonck stared in mute amazement.

"That, of course, is the chief objection in these days to a monarchy," Guido went on. "The social prestige which inheres in the person of the monarch and which all the charlatans and adventurers of the realm can use as a nucleus for their machinations."

"I," said Herr Wesendonck, "I have been convinced by this War that the monarchical form of government is the only right form."

"Come, come," said Professor Geddes, "that's rather a strong statement for an American citizen to make."

"After the War is over," said Herr Wesendonck, "I shall be an American citizen no longer. I shall go back to the Fatherland."

Sir Edward Grey, he next informed the others, had been driven to insanity by remorse at having caused the world conflagration. This interesting item of intelligence he claimed to have gleaned from the Swiss papers.

No one challenged it. They were all too much intrigued by the man's insouciant effrontery to reprove him.

Mr. Wilson, he said, was such an autocrat and had peppered the country to such a degree with spies—all Southern job-hunters who had to be given lucrative employment—that no man's life was safe if he ventured to criticise the President. Therefore wary Germans had taken to referring to the President as Herr Schneider. For what law could reach one, what spy could jail one, if one said that Herr Schneider was *ein Schuft, ein Hallunke, ein Idiot, ein Kettenhund?*

Guido could not refrain from saying:

"That reminds me of a story which was told me by a

friend who traveled in Germany about eight years ago." This friend, Guido said, had a large number of acquaintances in Berlin who, however, were not mutual friends. He spent a few days successively with each of them, in turn coming in contact with entirely different circles of Berlin life. At the house of the first friend he heard shocking tales about a Herr Meyer, which did not particularly interest him excepting that he wondered at the fury displayed as his friend and his friend's friends tore to pieces the reputation of a man whom they apparently knew very intimately. At the house of the second friend, who was more reticent, a visitor one evening made a contemptuous remark about a Herr Meyer, evoking a sharp, angry acquiescence from the host in Herr Meyer's complete asininity. A similar incident occurred at the house of a third friend, and as Guido's friend did not suppose that all these people, who were unacquainted among each other, should have the same mutual acquaintance, he concluded that the Meyers of Berlin must constitute one of those families of criminals of which Havelock Ellis and Lombroso and other criminologists write so entertainingly. But when he again encountered his old acquaintance, Herr Meyer, in the home of a fourth friend, who had never heard of any of the three other friends, the American became suspicious and demanded an explanation. He was sworn to secrecy and then told Herr Meyer could not have a German subject thrown into jail for *lèse majesté*, but the Kaiser could.

Professor Geddes laughed heartily.

"I suspect you, Guido," he said, "of adding one or two fancy touches of your own to that story. But I dare say the verdict of history will bestow upon the Meyers of Berlin the sinister distinction of being the most famous criminal family in the world."

Herr Wesendonck was furious. He pulled himself together, however, and presently began to tell how an American, caught in Belgium at the outbreak of the War, had lost his way while driving his car. He could not find anyone to direct him because the natives spoke French and he understood nothing but English. Then he encountered some German officers, driving in their car, and *they* had directed him in perfect English.

"Now," said Herr Wesendonck, triumphantly, "I ask you, how many American officers could have directed a German in perfect German?"

"Very few," Professor Geddes admitted, with a twinkle in his eye, and Guido said:

"What gets me is this, Herr Wesendonck. All the German officers one hears about speak English perfectly. Yet here in America, with every facility to learn a fluent and easy English at first hand, very few Germans acquire any sort of vocabulary or even the proper accent. How do you explain this?"

But each new rebuff only added to the zest of Herr Wesendonck's apostolic labors in Germany's behalf. He did not hate America, he said, and he called upon God to witness the fact, but so many German-Americans—he deplored the sad truth—seemed to think that it was impossible to be fond of both countries. And he compared Germany to a man's mother, America to a man's wife. Did loyalty to one's wife mean forsaking the mother who had borne and reared one?

Guido, disgusted with this sentimental rubbish, which he had heard dozens of times before, said, sharply:

"The comparison is an inexact one, of course. In taking the vow of allegiance to this country, it is necessary to renounce allegiance to all foreign potentates. Then why not compare Germany to a man's first wife forced upon him by his parents before he reached years of discretion, and divorced by him for good and sufficient reasons, and America to the second wife, chosen by himself? It would be a pretty poor sort of a man, I think, who in the event of a quarrel between the two women, would hark back to the divorced wife and take her part against the second wife, or speak of loving both equally well at the same time."

Wesendonck did not press the point. Like the good strategist he was, finding one position invulnerable, he turned his attention to another supposedly less strongly intrenched point. He said America was in a state of artificially induced hysteria; there had been no passport swindles, no bomb plots, no Zimmerman cabal at all—everything was the invention of the lying, venal, traitorous American press. But—if there had been bomb plots, passport swindles, Zimmerman cabals—what of it? And he

invited Guido to admit candidly that if he had been in Germany when America declared war, he would have done everything in his power, fair means or foul, to further the interests of the American cause—"irrespective of how many German civilians were hurt in the process," he concluded.

"Oh, I think not," said Guido, adding, with fine scorn, "I go so far in my regard for enemy civilians that I refrain from denouncing certain persons of my acquaintance whom, as a good American, I probably ought to denounce."

Wesendonck glared—simply glared. After a pause, which no one attempted to bridge over, he said:

"I suppose you continue to disapprove of the submarine warfare?"

Guido went very white, and Professor Geddes and his wife turned faces full of such grave rebuke toward Wesendonck that if the latter had been at all sensitive to emotional atmosphere, which he was not, he would have realized that he was blundering into something of keen personal interest to the little group which he was harrowing.

Professor Geddes replied for Guido.

"Mr. von Estritz naturally would continue to disapprove of the submarine warfare," he said, coldly. "You do not seem to know that his mother, well-known as the Princess Vasalov, perished at sea a little over a fortnight ago, when the Norwegian vessel on which she was crossing, was torpedoed."

Wesendonck turned livid. His callowness was shattered at last.

"Oh," he exclaimed, "I am so sorry."

Guido's face was full of white distress, as he retorted:

"No, you are not sorry, Mr. Wesendonck—you will be sorry when the Americans enter Berlin—not before."

Guido was ashamed of his words immediately he had spoken. He felt that he had committed an unpardonable breach of social etiquette in virtually calling a fellow-guest a liar. He was suffused with shame. Wesendonck, almost as white as Guido, rose to go after a pause in which Mrs. Geddes moved the tea-things around unnecessarily, and Professor Geddes seemed engrossed in studying the unfrayed edges of his immaculately laundered cuffs.

"I think I must be going," Wesendonck said, a little uncertainly. He offered to shake hands with his hostess.

Mrs. Geddes extended her finger-tips, and injected into her frosty smile a world of perfunctoriness. Wesendonck then bowed to the Professor and to Guido, and Guido bowed to Wesendonck. Neither of the two young men spoke. Then the Professor, also without speaking, but with the utmost punctilio of manner, showed the Teutonic fire-brand to the door.

"I am so sorry, Mrs. Geddes," Guido murmured. "I've behaved unpardonably."

"I believe you have," Mrs. Geddes replied, with the friendliest smile imaginable.

"I am sure you have," said the Professor, coming in from the hall. Evidently the adieus between the Professor and his guest had been the briefest possible between two gentlemen.

He took Guido by the shoulders affectionately.

"Served him good and right, my boy," he said.

"Of course," said Mrs. Geddes, "we cannot discuss one guest with another, but don't you think, Professor, that we might be justified in regarding Mr. Wesendonck as an enemy instead of as a guest?"

The incident ended there.

Guido asked permission to telephone his mother that he would not be home for supper, and while he was at the telephone, which stood on the Professor's desk in his study, Janet was silently admitted by her mother who had been watching for her from the drawing-room window.

"Who's in there?" Janet demanded.

Mrs. Geddes drew her daughter into the drawing-room, and softly shut the door.

"Guido is here," she said, "and I asked him to stay for dinner—he has such a piece of news to tell you."

Mrs. Geddes regretted her words as soon as she had uttered them. Janet's face underwent a remarkable change. It seemed dipped in a sudden rare, sweet brightness, as if a great ray of inward light were irradiating it. Mrs. Geddes perceived with dismay that she had raised a false hope, and answering the question in Janet's eyes, said, quickly:

"Oh, I might as well tell you, he has enlisted."

"Oh," said Janet, and all the wonderful light that had

made her face glow like the face of a madonna, disappeared as quickly as it had come.

Her mother's heart sank at the sight.

"Does she love him as much as that?" thought the older woman. "Well, she shall have him. That pink-and-white, bread-and-butter-miss shall not stand in my girl's way."

Resolutions of this sort are more difficult to carry out than to make, as Mrs. Geddes, whose sense of humor was always close at hand, realized almost immediately.

Janet, without waiting to take off her hat or pull off her gloves, went to her father's study. Guido was hanging up the receiver as she came in. She gave her father a swift kiss, and then shook hands with Guido.

"I am so glad to see you," she said, in a tone sufficiently conversational to mask her deeper feelings.

"I have not written yet to thank you for your letter; it was awfully sweet of you to write me when my mother——" he broke off.

"I was so desperately sorry——" said Janet.

Their hands had fallen apart and their lips were silent, but the quality of the silence that flickered between them was divinely eloquent. They were examining each other with the frank, healthy interest with which one examined a treasured possession which has long been mislaid.

He was the more changed of the two. When she had seen him the last time he had been a mere boy, a soft, enthusiastic, pliable boy. He was a man now, with all the virile resolution and stiffened stamina of purpose which inheres in manhood. She had at the same time the sensation that he belonged to her and to her only, and the contradictory feeling that there were heights in his nature—depths, too, perhaps—which she could never reach. On the whole she belonged to him more than he did to her. She realized it with a pang. Whether he claimed his possession or not—she was his, irrevocably, irremediably, unchangeably his.

The curse of Eve—or its blessing—lay heavily upon her.

The change which he noted in her was far less obvious, far more subtle. Her personal sorrow had laid a curbing, restraining, refining hand upon a nature formerly rendered slightly restless by too many rich, swift currents of interest. She was, if anything, more beautiful than ever.

Her rich nature was being harmonized and blended into a perfect entirety. She conveyed the impression of possessing a self-restraint so exquisite that it had become second nature, fitting glovelike over the sweet rare, fundamental nature for which it served as a raiment but in no way as a check. She was in no way artificial. Her smile, her speech her gestures were frank and natural, yet not too frank or too natural. They suggested, rather than revealed, the resonant temperament which inspired them. She seemed enveloped in a sort of patina formed by the action of time upon experience.

He thought, "If I had never seen her before I should fall in love with her now. She is perfect. To describe her were specious folly. For perfection is the summary of description."

"Professor," said Mrs. Geddes, "will you have time now to help me open the box?"

"What box, my dear?" the Professor inquired, innocently. A glance from his wife's eyes instructed him.

"Why, Jane, of course," he said. "*That* box. Surely, my dear."

"Are we doing right?" he inquired of his wife, after they had left the study and sought refuge in the dining-room.

"Professor," she said, "I am sorry for your conscience. I truly am. Did that little bread-and-butter miss, that pink-and-white little simpleton do right when she chained a boy like that to her? Stuff and nonsense, Professor. Don't tell me. I thought at first it was a mere boy and girl affair, and that it would be over in a month or so. But there is more to it. That girl wants him—him or his money. Some women are unconscionable when it comes to man-hunting."

"My dear, my dear," expostulated the Professor.

"He doesn't love her," Mrs. Geddes continued. "For if he loved her he could not love Janet, too."

"Men," said the Professor, sadly, "are polygamists at heart."

"Well," Mrs. Geddes retorted calmly, "perhaps women are polyandrists at heart, too. But different loves happen successively—not simultaneously. Is that true, Professor?"

The professor admitted that this was true.

"Then," said Mrs. Geddes, "I have proven my case. That bread-and-butter person must know as well as everybody else does that Guido doesn't love her—so why doesn't she offer to release him?"

"Perhaps she loves him," said the Professor, meekly.

"Then her love is a very selfish love, I should say," said Mrs. Geddes. "Anyhow, he loves our girl and our girl loves him. Now don't tell me, Professor, that you thought I was opposed to him. I was opposed to allowing Janet to tie herself down for life before she had seen something of men. Well, she has seen the jungle and all its species by this time. She's been down to Palm Beach for a season and had a lot of men of the fancy frill variety make love to her. And it did not cure her of her love for this boy. And she has been in the hospital for a year and a half, and has seen men of every condition of life—worked shoulder to shoulder with indecently good-looking young doctors and waited on unforgivably handsome young men. And they've had no effect on her. So I judge, Professor, that hers is a stubborn case. Now, what are we going to do about it?"

"Better wait and see what *they* do about it," was the Professor's judicious advice.

"Yes, but Janet won't allow him to propose to her while he is engaged to another girl."

"Jane, they will have to solve the problem for themselves," said the Professor, and fled to his room for a shave and a bath. He always changed for dinner.

Meanwhile Guido and Janet had seated themselves on the davenport, a decorous distance between them, as if they were fully alive to the danger which a too close proximity might breed. The old, careless, boy and girl freedom with each other, the spontaneous plucking at each other's sleeves, or tapping one upon the other's hand to attract quick attention was gone forever. Hereafter the touch of hand upon hand, be it ever so casual, ever so desultory, must mean a caress.

So they sat with the entire length of the davenport between them, a couple of pillows for nervous fingers to play with serving as an additional barbed wire against marauding emotions. Thus they talked. And though they were left entirely to themselves during that blessed hour

before dinner, not a word or a gesture passed between them which might not have been heard or seen by all the world, Elschen included.

But what power on earth or in heaven can rob the mute unconscious eloquence of the human eye of its virtue? Whenever the tongues of these two young persons left off talking, their eyes—time being too precious to be wasted—picked up the conversation and discoursed in this wise.

Quoth Guido's eyes:

"The fool must suffer for his folly and the sinner for his sin. But why should those who are innocent both of folly and sin be chastised for the folly of the fool and the sin of the sinner? Answer me that, sweet daughter of woman, sweet mother that is to be of men?"

And Janet's eyes replied:

"If the innocent did not suffer for the guilty, the punishment of the fool and of the sinner would be diminished by one-half. For even the fool hath some sort of an understanding and the sinner some sort of a heart. Therefore it behooves the fool to turn from his folly and the sinner to renounce his sin."

And his eyes rejoined:

"But in what wise can the fool turn from his folly? He cleaves not unto it—but it unto him. It dogs his footsteps, it haunts his dreams, it shadows his days. Why should folly be punished after this fashion? With what measure shall be measured to sin, if folly is dealt with after this manner?"

Her eyes comforted him, saying:

"Be patient but a while longer. Folly is but a bauble, and a bauble, being unduly strained, must break. Therefore be patient, for patience will wear out folly unless destiny itself dons the motley and plays the clown."

Said his eyes:

"I will leave off my lamenting. You have faith in me still. Why, then, should I complain? You have faith in me, though I have outraged that faith; you have faith in me, though I have broken the troth which we did not plight, it is true, but which was plighted for us by Nature; you have faith in me, though your senses avouch that I am not that you thought I was. What a churl am I to complain of the deserts of folly! You have faith in me.

I should praise the rewards of folly and not lament its chastisement."

Said her eyes:

"My faith in you is rooted in my very soul. Tear up that faith and strew my soul to the winds—by virtue of that faith my soul shall be gathered together again, and bound together and healed. My faith in you is as great as my faith in myself, nay, greater; for in myself I perceive imperfections and flaws; but in you I see divinity only. Your folly is to me a visitation; your sin an affliction; both are things apart from yourself, not kith and kin of your soul. And it is in your soul that I have faith, being a thing hedged in by eternity and tempered by divinity even as my own. How should I not have faith in your soul? It is interlaced with my own. Destroy my faith in yourself, and you shatter my little world to atoms, for without faith in himself no man or woman shall live."

Said his eyes:

"My love, my love, we twain are one and indivisible. All things come to an end, save only love. Therefore rejoice, my love, with an exceeding great joy, for the hour of my deliverance is at hand, and no man's hand shall stay it beyond the appointed hour."

When the Professor went into his study to call the two young people for dinner, he found them rapt in a silence so profound that he wondered whether embarrassment had made them thus tongue-tied. He did not guess that he had interrupted a majestic love-song which had shaken them both to the very foundations of their being.

CHAPTER XXII

WHILE Guido was engaged in packing his grip the day before his departure for camp, the bell rang sharply. He was alone in the house, the maid having gone out on an errand, so he went and opened the door.

The young man whom Guido admitted looked familiar and yet Guido could not place him.

"I am afraid you do not recognize me," said the stranger, in German.

"I have seen you before, but where?" Guido rejoined. "Come in, won't you, and give my memory a chance to retrieve itself."

"My name is Redlich," said the young man, after Guido had led the way into the parlor.

"Ah, yes," said Guido. And now he remembered his visitor perfectly. Redlich was the young German who had made so favorable an impression upon him at Egon von Dammer's stag-party.

"I hope you do not not resent my coming here," Redlich began, uncertainly.

"Indeed, I am glad to see you again. I'm going to camp to-morrow morning——" Guido stopped, and gave an embarrassed laugh. "I might as well be frank with you," he said. "It's good, you know, to feel that there is at least one enemy whom one need not despise. You didn't fit in with that von Dammer-Horwitz crowd any more than I did, Redlich. We're on opposite sides of the fence, politically, but there need be no personal animosity between us on that account."

"I am not so certain that we are on opposite sides of the fence," said Redlich, almost explosively, and Guido became aware quite suddenly that his visitor was laboring under some tremendous excitement.

"Ah!" said Guido, vaguely.

"That's why I came here," Redlich continued. "I am going away. I cannot tell you where. But away. Far

away. And before I go I wanted to see you once more—I wanted you to know that—well, as you put it just now, I didn't fit in with the rest of that crowd."

Guido settled himself comfortably in his chair as for a long talk.

"Go on," he said.

Redlich was sitting on the edge of his chair, stiff and straight as a ferule, and apparently in readiness for one of those angular German bows which Guido, in the unregenerate days of his adolescence, had admired along with the Kaiser and other things which had since become taboo.

Redlich had nice friendly, honest brown eyes, and there was in them an outraged look, as if something had hurt him irreparably. He continued:

"I don't know that I have anything definite to tell you, but I could not go away without letting you know that I feel differently about things to what I did that evening when we met at von Dammer's."

"By 'things' I suppose you mean the War," said Guido.

"Yes," said Redlich, in a thick, pained voice.

"What brought the change about?" Guido inquired. He was intensely interested. He realized that his first expectation was not to be fulfilled. Redlich had no intention of making any specific revelation—was, perhaps, not in position to do so. But what he was about to say would be a revelation nevertheless, the human document sort of a revelation, which to the stay-at-homes and the historian must ever present one of the most interesting features of the War.

Redlich was silent for almost a minute, and finally Guido repeated his question.

"I can tell you in a few words how the change took place. Living in America. That's all. Just living in America."

Guido changed his nonchalant attitude to one of expectancy.

"Living in America," he repeated, not quite certain of Redlich's meaning.

"That's it!" Redlich's doggy brown eyes looked more hurt than ever. "I remember your telling me that you have never been abroad. Well, America is different. It's just different."

This was not very explicit, and Guido felt impelled to dig further into Redlich's reticence for clarification.

"I do not quite make out what you mean," he said. "Of course, I think there is no country like America. Perhaps I wouldn't if I had had the advantage of travel." He laughed easily. It was the laugh of a man who makes an argumentative concession with excellent grace because he knows that it is purely fictional—a mere rhetorical amenity.

"No, you would feel just the same—or rather, you'd feel the same a thousand times more strongly," said Redlich, with great heat. "That's what I am trying to make plain to you. I have been here a little over two years. My parents were patriotic Germans but at the same time inveterate admirers of America. Then the War came along and it became the fashion to hate America—because of the ammunition, you know, and your work in Belgium. Well, as a good German, I felt it my duty to hate England and America. So I hated. I hated as vigorously as I could. I do not think I ever hated as vigorously as I should. Anyhow, I was—I came here. The crowd I fell in with were good Germans, but they laughed at me for my systematic and conscientious hate. 'That's for the plebeians,' von Dammer said to me. 'How are you going to make the *canaille* with all their *spießbuergerliche* ideas on religion and all the rest of that ethical nonsense fight unless you apply an irritant?' So I discarded my hate. I do not think I am being quite exact. I think it had fallen away from me long before I officially discarded it."

"You see," Redlich continued, "life has a different savor in America. It is hard to put this into precise language. Words are clumsy things when it comes to painting fine shades." Guido nodded appreciatively. This young man, like Mazie Sheldrake, was too good to be true. He wanted to tell Redlich, "You should have been an American." Then he remembered that Otto had said Cecil should have been a German. And he set his lips to a rigid pattern and said nothing.

"It's the same in all countries, excepting this," Redlich rambled on. "And, of course, it's worst in Germany. Over there everybody seems to worry continually about his own and the other chap's social position, and whether he is being shown the right degree of politeness by the person of the

lower social strata, and whether himself is producing the proper servility in addressing folks of the higher social strata—or too much. For it's not courtesy, you understand. Courtesy is the fine flower of human kindness, a very different thing from the graded and standardized, cut and dried, weighed and measured politeness whose object it is to emphasize at every possible point of social contact the invisible barriers which divide the different classes from each other.

"That's what I meant when I said that America is different. Democracy is here in the air. The street car conductor may be abominably rude to you, but he's a human being, and if you are in trouble he will help you without any thought of reward. In some parts of Germany," he added, "it is customary to tip conductors. And if you don't you are liable to receive pretty bad treatment."

Guido did not dare interrupt Redlich. His revelation was not specific, it is true, but Guido would not have missed it for worlds.

"There is a kindness here, a good-nature, an incessant and unconscious recognition of the rights of others that I have found nowhere else. During the rush hours people stampede through the streets without stampeding each other. They bob and duck and jump aside to prevent colliding. Sometimes there is a collision. But no one seems to mind. No one seems to think for a moment that the collision was anything but accidental or anybody's fault in particular. I have seen people fall over each other at Brooklyn Bridge in a way which, if it happened abroad, would start a fight and cause an arrest. But here everybody seems to realize that the other fellow is just as anxious to get home for supper as himself. So what's the use of getting cross and wasting your own and the other fellow's time?

"I don't mean that all things in America are perfect. I have seen horrible creatures—rowdies, you call them—a sort of nondescript human by-product with dreadful faces and capable of ear-splitting noises.

"But these creatures are exceptions.

"When I was young to the ways of the country, I had occasion to cross one of the ferries quite frequently. One day I was anxious to make a certain train. It was late,

and the bridgeman closed the gate just as I came rushing into the ferry-house. I produced a dollar and attempted to bribe him to open the gate and let me through. He grinned, shook his head and vanished. A friend of mine, an American, to whom I complained of the man's impertinence—for what was his grin but impertinence?—laughed and said, 'The next time try telling him a yarn of your sick mother who is waiting for you at the other end. And don't offer him a tip.'

"Prompted by curiosity, I followed my friend's advice. My story acted like a magic potion. The gate was flung open, the deckhands stalled in their labor of unwinding the capstan, the departure of the boat delayed. I called a hurried thanks over my shoulder to the obliging bridgeman.

"'That's all right,' he called back, cheerily. 'Hope you get there in time.'

"You may laugh at me," Redlich continued, with growing energy, "but that little episode symbolizes and summarizes all America for me. Helpfulness. Helpfulness at every turn. And kindness. And friendliness, and above all, humanity. Or, in one word, the word which as a German I ought to-day to revile and to deride—democracy.

"And you people are not narrow. You are in some respects quite unbelievably lenient toward transgressors of the minor moral code. Big offenses shake you. But you haven't time, you really haven't time, to get terribly excited about the petty thief, or the girl who has gone wrong and has managed to get back, or the man who is doing a little petty grafting on the side. I am not quite certain that I like this side of the American character. And yet we Germans are reaping the benefit of it. As a nation you abominate us. You believe all manner of evil against us. You loathe, despise us, execrate us. Yet you exonerate the individual German, or try to. You ransack your imaginations for reasons to help whitewash him. Your President's declaration of war against the Imperial German government, his insistence upon the fact that America has no grudge in the world against the German civilian as such, is typical of America. It is America's spirit incarnate. To none but an American statesman would such a declaration of war have been possible. And it was possible to him because he is a product of his own country and his

time—being an American he hates the offense but condones the offender.

"The Germans in America, too, are profiting by this generally diffused American trait. One German was lynched in the Middle-West. He must have been a most injudicious talker. Here in the East there has been no mobbing of Germans, no jeers, no insults, no outrages of any sort. It is true you are showing a decided dislike for the German language—you think German papers and books ought to disappear, you will probably bar German music as time goes on, and German-made goods are taboo now—but you are not wrecking the poor little shops of German grocers and *Delikatessen-Handlungen* the way they did in England; and you are not boycotting the little German trades people, and, excepting in munition factories, your American employer is not discriminating against German labor.

"All this is very fine, very fine.

"After America declared war, a friend of mine, believing that his camera was subject to confiscation, went to the district attorney's office and presented it.

"'What for?' he was asked.

"'I am a German subject,' he replied.

"'Well, apparently, you do not intend to photograph things you have no business to photograph,' the assistant district attorney remarked. 'Just give us your word that you will use the camera only for your own amusement, and it will be all right.'

"Now I don't believe, I don't believe," said Redlich, speaking with a sort of implacable energy, as if he defied the entire world to challenge his opinion, "I don't believe that there is another country in the wide world where the alien enemy would be allowed to go about his business and his pleasure to the same degree without any interference whatever on the part of the authorities. I am quite certain there is not another country in the world where it would be done.

"I can tell you," he concluded, "*Amerika ist kolossal, grossartig, grossherzig.*" And as if he wished to make quite certain that there would be no mistake about it, he repeated himself in English, "America is great," he said.

He said little more. His effort had been expended, but

his enthusiasm, it was easy to see, was by no means exhausted. His cup of admiration for America had been filled to overflowing, but having overflowed, the vessel which held his admiration still retained the bulk of its contents.

Yet Redlich conveyed the curious effect of a man who has missed his climax. There was in all he had said, as Guido divined, a purpose. But whither was that purpose directed? Had he missed the climax by chance or by calculation? The latter probably. And yet Guido felt that he could not be certain. Redlich did not give the impression of an invertebrate young man. He seemed to be a young man of strenuous efficiency. He had come to say something to Guido, and he had said just so much and no more. But—was there anything else to say?

When, at the end of an hour Redlich rose to bid Guido good-bye he did so in these words:

"Good luck to you, to America and to democracy!"

After he was gone Guido sat down and thought it all over. Certain points of the young German's narrative deserved closer scrutiny. He had with the utmost definiteness pointed out the dissimilarity which existed between himself and his former companions. He believed in America's destiny—in her righteousness, he had phrased it—but did that not come to the same thing? And he was going away, but he had not told Guido where he was going. Nor had he told what he was going away from. Once he had almost made a slip. He had almost said something which most particularly he did not wish to say. He had said, "Then I was—" and catching himself in time had concluded with—"came to America." What was it that he had started to say? It was not hard to guess. "Then I was sent to America."

There was an obvious inference to be drawn from this which Guido did not want to draw. Inferences were double-edged things, anyhow. Guido remembered the inference he had drawn concerning Otto's trip to France. And now Otto was dead—dead for the cause which Guido had believed him capable of betraying.

There is something particularly obnoxious to the decent-minded man in the denouncing of a fellow-creature. Guido reflected that certainty of actual or projected guilt would have made his duty in the matter very plain. But how

could he be certain? And of what? And of whom? Redlich was an innocent man. Of that there could be no doubt. Of Egon Guido had long been suspicious. Guido had met Egon in New York some three months earlier and had asked him whether he was still living at the McAvoy.

"The McAvoy? Oh, I've been gone there long ago," Egon replied. And in the further course of conversation he had shown such a familiarity with the cuisine and management of nearly all the famous hostelrys of New York that Guido, at the time, had found himself wondering why Egon changed his habitation so often. He perceived now, with painful lucidity, just what the reason for that frequent change of abode might have been—might still be.

"But," said Guido, "it is impossible to suspect a chap who has been decently brought up and who, like Egon, is insanely proud of the traditions of his blood, of down-right criminality such as is involved in passport swindles, and blowing up of bridges, and bomb-placing on outgoing vessels. He's probably just a propagandist, like Dernburg, with this difference, that he and his co-workers were told to do their work by word of mouth in friendly argument with friend and acquaintance."

Guido became quite cheerful. This construction of Egon's activity would amply explain his continual moving about, since his work would require incessant enlargement of his circle of acquaintances. Guido had no love for the German propagandist, but he considered him a negligible factor in the war since he defeated his own ends, for all that the cheap casuistry and tawdry sentimentality, which were his stock in trade, accomplished, was to make red-blooded Americans more angry. The only menace that Guido saw in the activity of these jackals of the German Empire was the possibility that anti-German riots might be provoked if they continued to ply their nefarious profession. That would be deplorable, of course. No well-wisher of America would care to see upon her escutcheon a blot of that sort.

And after he had proven to his complete satisfaction that Egon could not possibly be dabbling in really "bad" things, he remembered Dr. Dumba. Dr. Dumba, presumably, had been as well brought up as Egon, and had quite as much to be proud of as an untried boy. Yet Dr.

Dumba had not disdained to connive in or to engineer the blowing up of American property.

It was not nice. Decidedly, it was not nice to think that highly intelligent, well-educated men who had enjoyed the advantages of a decent upbringing in civilized homes could, at the command of their government, turn themselves into international safe-breakers and dynamiters.

On the spur of the moment, Guido decided to do a little detective work of his own. He telephoned to a dozen of the largest hotels of New York, and inquired for Egon, only to be told by each hotel clerk in turn that Mr. von Dammer had left some time ago.

Well then, if Egon was not to be found——

It might be necessary, after all, to inform the Secret Service.

Guido returned to the packing of his kit, and presently, in the excitement of his departure from home and arrival at camp and the joy of the fine new adventure upon which he was at last embarked, forgot all about Redlich and Egon.

But his thoughts were brought back to Redlich with something of a thud about a week later. He was sitting in the "Y" hut, reading the evening paper, when, in turning over a page, his eye happened to alight upon a paragraph at the bottom of the page. The compact display type of the head-line caught his eyes.

"Redlich found dead near a Jersey Bridge," the head-line ran, and the paragraph that followed informed Guido that a young German named Redlich had been found near a draw-bridge in northern Jersey, shot through the head. Apparently he was a suicide. He had been identified by the people with whom he had boarded for over a year. They were Americans, but spoke highly of the deceased. They could offer no reason for Redlich's desperate deed.

Guido sat staring at the paper from between narrowed eyes. He re-read the short paragraph, with the meager information it contained, half a dozen times.

"Now," he said, suddenly, "I wonder—was it suicide? And where is Egon von Dammer?"

But his business at the moment was to learn how to fly and not to do amateur detective work. So he dismissed the matter from his mind, and threw himself wholeheartedly into the performance of his daily tasks.

CHAPTER XXIII

IT is not the object of this history to record Guido von Estritz's sojourn in camp. Suffice it to say that he enjoyed the new life—with certain reservations. There was just enough exercise in the open and enough study indoors, turn and turn about, to give the right flavor to existence. The food was plain but good—very good, Guido thought. Some of the boys complained. They missed the dainties to which they had been accustomed at home—home-made cookies and pies and apple dumplings and charlotte russe and prune whisps. As a matter of fact Guido missed these refinements of the super-culinary art also. But he would not say so. He would not say so for obvious reasons. In the first place he was a little ashamed of himself for giving any thought at all to the matter of food, when the government had provided for them so plentifully in the way of what Guido called "honest-to-goodness" food. A big slab of roast beef, mashed potatoes, peas, beans or tomatoes, followed by a plain rich pudding ought to be good enough for any man, Guido thought. And on Sunday there was chicken—all one wanted of it—and asparagus or cauliflower, potatoes and ice-cream. Indeed, ever since the tragedy of *Mamotschka's* life had been brought home to Guido, involving as it did twenty years of semi-starvation, Guido never sat down to a well-prepared meal without experiencing a sense of compunction and shame. There were times when the recollection of *Mamotschka* robbed him of his zest for food. He liked good food as much as anybody, but at thought of *Mamotschka* his palate seemed to undergo mortification, and he ate because he needed to eat, not because he enjoyed his food.

So that, although he experienced an occasional hankering for some of those triumphs of the culinary art which Frau Ursula's kitchen turned out as a matter of course and of daily routine, he did not really yearn for them. It

was a mere passing sensation which never lingered long enough to cause him serious inconvenience, and the boxes of goodies which Frau Ursula sent him from time to time were enjoyed far more by his tent-mates than by himself.

One source of creature discomfort, the very existence of which he had not even anticipated before coming to camp, threatened to become the bane of his life. He slept in one tent with five other men, and two of these snored. They snored resonantly, intemperately, incessantly. Guido did not close an eye the first night, and was utterly miserable the next day. But on the second night, he was so tired that he fell asleep before the nocturnal concert began, and never awoke until his tent-mates poked him untenderly in the ribs. Even the bugle had failed to arouse him. The third night was sleepless again. On the fourth he slept. Thus it continued for a fortnight, sleepless nights alternating with restful nights. After that he slept the sleep of the just and the unjust every night of the week.

He was fortunate in having been assigned to a camp on Long Island. A furlough was not as difficult to obtain as he had supposed, and he came home every second or third week for a day or two. Owing to the unsettled condition of Hauser's affairs, Frau Ursula remained in town all summer, a town which, under impact of the War, was blooming into hectic, feverish, metropolitan semblance. Gone was the air of staid sedateness which had made a huge village of Anasquoit in spite of its compactly packed square mile of houses. Strangers crowded the streets—streets which hitherto had never presented a crowded appearance excepting at church time, or when the theaters were out, or during a fire. There were a legion of faces which no Anasquoitian had ever looked upon before. There were men in khaki, and there were men in navy blue, and it was amazing how very, very many of these there were—as if America had poured her entire contingent of trained men into the port of Anasquoit for immediate shipment abroad.

The German liners, lichen and barnacle covered after their three years' expensive riding at anchor, was seized by the government, and, in spite of the hysterical pronunciamientos of the German sympathizers that "it simply can't be done," were made seaworthy in a very little while,

and, converted into transports, had actually sailed for Europe with their precious cargo while the Germans were still shouting themselves hoarse that the Americans were big fools to attempt the impossible—for nowhere, excepting in Germany, could the steel be tempered which was needed to replace certain mysteriously lost or damaged parts of the vessels' "innards."

In place of the pasty faces of the wretchedly fed German sailormen and stewards which had been one of the time-honored features of Anasquoit, one now saw seafaring men of a different hue and a different caliber. Turbaned Lascars, acting as stewards or servants or porters on British vessels, suddenly cropped up on all sides. And everywhere, on the street, at the theater, in church, were seen tall, slender, gawkily graceful lads so typically English in their small-featured pink and white prettiness that they inevitably suggested the description of "Johnnies." What were they doing in Anasquoit? No one knew, excepting the government, and the government did not tell.

The physical limitations of Anasquoit were indomitably fixed by the river on the port side, by the Palisades to leeward, by two flourishing towns to right and left of it. But now it had become distended—with no direction in which to grow excepting skyward. Skyward it accordingly grew as far as factories were concerned, but the housing problem remained, for you cannot let out three or four-story apartment houses as you would a skirt.

Neat-looking, perfectly groomed, perfectly mannered young officers walked the streets disconsolately for hours after arrival in Anasquoit, in quest of a room. Some had a grip in their hand and a wife at their side, and some had a grip only. The men were provided for in barracks occupying what had once been Hauser's Leviathan, but the officers were expected to find quarters for themselves. A downtown hostelry had been converted into an Officer's House. This hotel had formerly been known as "The Bismarck," but, like the street of the same name, had sloughed off the damning appellation in favor of "Union," a name sufficiently amorphous to protect its originators from the charge of sycophancy.

Numerous other enterprises—banks, insurance companies, *Gesellschaften*, *Klubs* and *Vereine*, which, in ante-

bellum days had flourished under a similarly blatant Teutonic nomenclature, had not feared to incur derision as spittle-lickers, and now enjoyed security of life and limb and purse strings under such barbarisms as "National Union" or "National Liberty" or "Liberty and Union."

The housing question was serious, and suddenly the entire town was seized with a mania for renting out rooms.

People who formerly would have turned up their noses in aristocratic disgust at the mere thought of taking in lodgers, now discovered that they had entirely too much room on their hands, and gayly rented out one, two or three rooms at war-prices. To the honor of these Anasquoitians be it said that many of them were sincerely touched by the plight of the gallant young officers from other States, and, as hospitable Anasquoitians felt it incumbent upon themselves to open their doors to as many of them as they could accommodate. And more than one dear old lady, who had been a violent German sympathizer before America had stepped into the War, and who now divided her time between cooking goodies for the soldiers and knitting socks for the sailors, wept indiscriminately over the handsome boys who left her threshold for Europe—never to return perhaps—and the poor, kind, misrepresented, misunderstood Kaiser who, poor old dear, must be in the verge of a nervous collapse after all *he* had been through.

Human inconsistency can traverse no further reaches. Guido, on listening to Frau Ursula's *chronique scandaleuse* on his visits home, laughed himself almost into hysterics. But his laughter suffered an abrupt termination whenever he happened to think of Egon von Dammer. Where was Egon now? What was he about? Had Redlich really killed himself or had he been done to death?

He obtained a furlough somewhat unexpectedly one Friday afternoon the latter part of September. He left camp on the early morning train and reached the Jersey ferry a little after noon. He walked through the cabins to the front of the boat, not expecting to meet anyone from Anasquoit at that hour of the day. To his surprise he saw the last person whom he expected to see. Janet was standing in the very elbow of the railing where he and she had

stood together one day in the first spring of their acquaintanceship.

His heart began to beat with a violence which, he thought, must be quite as audible as any other violent concussion. And as if that were so, and as if attracted by the sound, Janet turned and looked him squarely in the face. And then, because they both reddened alarmingly, they made a brave feint at not seeming in the least embarrassed, and stared at each other with eyes that burned as brightly as their cheeks.

But their confusion at the unexpectedness of the meeting was quenched by their joy in the meeting. They had so much to tell each other. And after the first hungry glances which their starved eyes could not deny themselves, they discreetly glued their eyes to the shifting water. There was, this time, almost as much of pain in seeing each other as of joy. Each had, after that delicious evening which they had spent together in June, indulged in the most fantastic and dangerous of avocations—they had built air-castles. Thus their consciences were not as guiltless as they had been. Each feared to disclose that which required no disclosure because the other was perfectly well aware of it. But the code of honor was held in high esteem by these two. They did not care to trample upon it.

"If he really loved me, he would find some way of breaking with Elschen," Janet told herself. "I am a fool." But she knew perfectly well that she was trying to cheat herself, and she was trying to cheat herself because she felt her reticence and her coolness slipping from her, and that would never do.

At the same time Guido was saying to himself: "If Elschen doesn't throw me over soon, I shall do something desperate. I shall tell her right out that I do not love her and never did. What I am doing in allowing the engagement to run on smells to heaven. It is criminal folly. It is cowardice. It is sheer, abject, blithering idiocy. It is a lie. It's a lie of the worst sort. I've simply got to crawl out of this infernal engagement some way or other."

A conversation subject to such a hazardous undertow of thought is predestined to languish. Janet shot out stray bits of information at Guido concerning her doings and her work, and Guido let flare similar enticing conversa-

tional nuggets pertaining to his pursuits. Both were thankful when the boat landed them on the Jersey side.

The day was warm but not sultry, and Janet said she preferred to walk the seven or eight blocks from the ferry to her home to waiting for the trolley, the uncertain schedule of which she compared to the return of a comet of unknown periodicity. Guido laughed delightedly. Where was there another girl who could throw off a joke like that without appearing a hopeless blue-stocking?

It will be seen from this that the relief afforded their overtrimming hearts by the simple expedient of locomotion, had torn the inertia from their tongues. They fell into a lively conversation as they swung along the sun-drenched streets. The sky was a heavenly blue, in which, as in a summer sea of purest indigo, floated fleecy white islands of cloud, bringing back happy memories of those two summers spent together at Three Corners.

They stopped for a moment at Janet's gate to conclude their talk. She was going to join her parents at "Waldheim" for a fortnight's leave the next day. She had come home to go through a trunk which contained some needed clothing. She hoped to see him again. Perhaps they could arrange for him to come to dinner some evening when she was at home. At any rate, before he went to France——

She did not finish her sentence. Their hearts were bounding again, leaping and pounding and setting up a horrible disturbance in their veins and a quite incredible din in their ears. They realized simultaneously that they were both profoundly miserable and that the mockery of trying to fool themselves and each other was sheerest nonsense. For one unforgettable moment the gossamer fabric of make-believe dropped away and they drank deep at the bourne of each other's eyes, apprehending there unbelievable things, things incredibly beautiful, amazingly intimate, deliciously tender and close.

Then, without speaking, Guido turned and fled. Literally, he fled from the danger of the moment. His pride in her was very great. He would not sully her by speaking to her of his love before he was free to offer it to her.

But how to regain his freedom?

He told himself that he had not striven hard enough to find an egress from the dreadful maze in which he was

tangled. But the sense of his impotence smote him almost at the same time, and neutralized his efforts. It was always the same. Was he to write Elschen, asking frankly to be released? Was he to wait until she began to cavil with him again, as she was sure to do upon the slightest provocation? It would be the easiest thing in the world to lead up to a quarrel with her in her fault-finding mood, and to deliberately shape the quarrel toward a climacteric rupture. But his manliness shrank from such a proceeding. It seemed petty and small and unworthy of himself and of Janet.

In his perturbation he was hurrying along at a tremendous speed. He had walked back to Bismarck Street, and was just turning the corner when he became aware that a high-pitched, querulous, aristocratic voice was hailing him very persistently. He turned, and saw Egon von Dammer running toward him.

"So," thought Guido, "here is my bird, at last." But now that he had his bird, Guido was not at all certain that he knew what to do with him. He could not call a policeman, and say, "Officer, arrest this man. I think he is a German spy. I have no foundation for that belief, no proof, no testimony, no evidence direct or circumstantial. Nevertheless, I think he is a spy, and that is why I hand him over to you."

Decidedly, that was a thing which one could not do.

"Where have you been keeping yourself?" he asked, as Egon caught up with him.

"Been out West. On business. I abominate business. How I wish I owned the spondulix some fellows do who don't know what to do with it."

Guido laughed.

Egon continued.

"I suppose you are as virtuous as ever," he said. "I suppose you still retain your virginity? I suppose you would as soon think of kissing a woman as of flying?"

"I'll relieve your mind, Egon," said Guido. "I am thinking—of flying. And I have kissed a woman."

"Yes, I see!" Egon scrutinized Guido's uniform. "D'ye know, you'd look stunning in the uniform of the Death's Head Hussars," he said.

"You have a nerve to say that to me," said Guido.

"Don't be absurd. I was talking of esthetic values. Who is the woman?"

"That would be telling," Guido replied, dryly.

"I see, your mother and your *Braeutschen*. Nice little thing, *Elschen*," he concluded, patronizingly. "I suppose you are going to stop in to see her now?"

Egon's question was caused by their proximity to the parsonage. They were very near the corner of Elm Street.

"I think not," said Guido, "half past one o'clock of a warm day is a bad hour to go calling on a girl."

They had reached the corner by this time, and Guido, turning down Elm, said:

"I am going down to Main Street to pay my tailor a visit. Which way are you going?"

Egon, it happened, was going down Elm Street also. Only to the middle of the block, however. Wedged in between the grounds of the church and the parsonage, which faced Union Street, and the large private mansion which faced Main, was a small tobacconist's shop, at which Egon, so he said, invariably bought his tobacco when in the East.

"If you have time," Egon said, "I'll run in to see you for a little chat this evening."

"Do," said Guido.

Guido felt very uncomfortable as he walked on toward Main Street. The spell which Egon's personality had cast upon him was as great as ever, but he could not blind himself to the fact that his suspicions, far-fetched as they must seem if put into cold words for the purpose of convincing the law, had a fairly sound foundation. The excitement which had held Redlich in its subtle but palpable grasp the last time he had seen the dead man, was a thing not to be forgotten—and it had never been explained. And there was Redlich's death. And everything.

When Egon called upon him he intended to ask him some point-blank questions. He meant to obtain information regarding certain obscure passages in his fascinating school-mate's life. Guido's quick eye had noted a decided change in Egon. He was as dashing, as debonnair, as arrogant as ever, but under these obvious qualities throbbed and palpitated a quality which was new, and in which

there was something of defiance, and something of challenge, and something of fear.

Guido's tailor was located on Main Street between Elm and Dogwood Streets, and after leaving Egon at the door of the tobacco shop, Guido went right to his tailor's. He emerged from the shop about twenty minutes later, and had walked but a few steps when he was stopped by a man who seemed to step forward out of nowhere.

"Pardon me—Mr. von Estritz?"

"That's my name," said Guido.

"Will you wait a minute, please. A fellow you know wants to talk to you," and he indicated a man who was hurrying toward them. Guido recognized the second man's face, but could not place him.

"Don't recognize me, do you?" inquired the man. "I'm Glanders. Stan introduced me to you one evening."

"So he did," Guido assented. He remembered that Stan had introduced Glanders to him one evening on the ferryboat, that haphazard meeting ground of all Anasquoitians. But he was entirely in the dark as to the man's vocation and social position. He was, Guido opined, what the English would designate as a "person."

"I'll be much obliged to you," Glanders continued, hurriedly, "if you will answer a few questions. I'll explain the reason for them later. Did you see a fellow to-day by the name of Egon von Dammer?"

"Why, yes," said Guido, "I left him a few minutes ago." He spoke quickly. Glander's manner conveyed a sense of desperate necessity and suddenly Guido's memory clicked. The man's calling was revealed by a curious searching look of the eyes, and unconscious forward crouching, a curious twist of the head, a general atmosphere of professional alertness which reminded Guido of nothing so much as of an Irish setter pointing his quarry.

So the Secret Service was relieving him of the trouble to investigate the occult activities of his former school-mate! Well, he was heartily glad of it.

"Where did you leave him?" Glanders inquired.

"At the door of the little cigar store next to the German Church. He was going in to buy cigarettes."

"Are you sure he went into the cigar store?"

"He said he was going in," Guido replied. "I didn't

turn to see if he did go in. But where else should he have gone?"

"That," said Glanders, "is what we are trying to find out. Come along, Pete!" The last sentence was addressed to the man who had stopped Guido. Then he started off at a brisk trot, which seemed to be his normal method of locomotion.

Guido called after him, but short of joining in the race, there was no way of eliciting information at the present moment. Guido, after a moment's hesitation, started to follow Glanders and "Pete" at a run, and would probably have caught up with them, or at least not have lagged far behind, if Dr. Erdman, alighting from his car a little further up the street, had not observed Guido galloping toward him. The doctor, with the same gestures which he would have employed in stopping a runaway horse, postured himself with spread-eagled legs and arms midway in Guido's path, and, flapping his hands up and down as if they had been fins and he a fish, shouted at Guido:

"What's your hurry?"

Tall, gaunt Dr. Erdman cut so comical a figure as he stood there, violently gesticulating, that Guido's risibilities got the better of him. Laughter distended his facial muscles and so agitated his abdominal nerves that his run petered out, and he came grotesquely to a stop.

"What's happened? What's the matter? What are you laughing at?" Dr. Erdman demanded.

"Everything's the matter," said Guido. "And the deuce is to pay. The Secret Service is after Egon von Dammer. I've suspected for some time that something was not as it should be with that young man."

• "Then don't let me keep you," said Dr. Erdman.

"Oh, I think I am quite satisfied to be 'kept,'" said Guido. "On the whole I'd rather not be present when they arrest him."

They stood and chatted for a few minutes. Then, after leaving Dr. Erdman, Guido, remembering that he had forgotten to give his tailor certain instructions, turned and went back to the shop. Here he had another wait of five minutes, for the tailor was engaged in measuring another customer.

Having given his instructions, Guido walked back to

Elm Street and then up toward Union. He was very curious as to Egon's fate, and now cursed his pusillanimity in not having seen the thing through. Then, once more, the old feeling of friendship for Egon asserted itself, and his curiosity as to Egon's immediate fate was merged in a sense of gratitude that the painful task of having to denounce Egon had been spared him.

He had no intention of going into the parsonage. He was very acutely aware that he had arrived at a crisis of his life. He dared no longer ignore the fact that by his policy of drifting, following a no less pernicious policy dictated by a false sense of honor, he had allowed himself to be betrayed into an intrinsically immoral position. He was, as we know, the least egoistic of men, and his habitual self-undervaluation had in the past made him persuade himself with intermittent success that the thought that Janet cared for him was a bit of egoism.

But he knew now for a certainty, and he felt as if he had known it right along, that Janet loved him. She loved him immeasurably; loved him as Elschen could never hope to love him, because Janet's love was based on understanding, on sympathy, on a congenial outlook upon life; while Elschen's love was an unreasoning infatuation, an infatuation which she probably persuaded herself derived a romantic value from their widely divergent outlook upon life.

Guido was fully determined to ask Elschen to release him. It was an unpleasant task, a task, moreover, which his manliness persuaded him must be performed in person and not by letter, and it was a task which would wait no longer. He was resolved to call upon Elschen later in the afternoon.

In passing the parsonage, however, the door was suddenly and vehemently flung open, and Elschen bounced out. She seemed greatly excited and her eyes were red from weeping.

"Bitte, Guido, einen Augenblick," she called to him.

Guido ran quickly up the stoop.

"What's the matter?" he asked, as the front door closed behind him.

"That it should come to this!" she burst out angrily. "If an angel from heaven had come and told me that

Guido von Estritz would do this thing, I would not have believed him."

"What have I done?" Guido asked, in amazement. He had completely forgotten Egon von Dammer. For a moment he entertained a wild vision of Elschen surreptitiously watching Janet and himself from the cabin of the boat.

"What have you done!" Elschen echoed, in her childish staccato. "You have betrayed one of your best friends. You have betrayed the friend to whose generosity you owe your scholarship."

"Egon von Dammer!" Guido exclaimed, wondering vaguely what Elschen knew of the von Dammer-Redlich snarl.

Elschen became so angry that she could hardly speak. From her wild jumble of disconnected words, Guido gleaned that Egon had been discovered in the parsonage by Glanders. The whole thing became plain to Guido. Glanders, not finding Egon in the small tobacco shop, had suspected him of hiding in the church or the parsonage, and had gone there to search for him. On being refused admittance by Elschen, Glanders had used his—Guido's—name in some way in order to accomplish his purpose.

Having blundered and stumbled through acres of unintelligible words, Elschen suddenly burst into tears. The tears cleared her brain and restored her power of speech.

"The detective told me that Mr. von Estritz had told him Mr. von Dammer had gone into the parsonage," Elschen flung out, "and he forced his way into the house, and searched it, and of course found Egon in the garret where I had put him."

"And why had you put Egon in the garret?" Guido demanded.

Elschen threw back her head with a gesture of childish defiance.

"Because those dreadful Americans were looking for him," she said. "He came running into the house just after he had passed the door with you—I saw you both walking along together—and he said, 'Elschen Marlow, we were school-mates and we are both good Germans. You know the Americans are helping England all they can to starve German women and children, and they are sending

over ammunition which will kill our brave German soldiers. And now they are going to send men over, too, to fight for England. But if a German tries to help a German, they put him in jail on some trumped-up charge. Now—they are after me. Hide me.' ”

“And you hid him?”

“Yes, I hid him,” Elschen replied, proudly.

Guido groaned

“Where is your father?” he demanded.

“He was in his study writing his sermon for next Sunday,” Elschen retorted, “and I did not wish to disturb him, because sometimes it is so hard for him to concentrate. And I knew he would have done just as I did. Or, if he wouldn't have, he should have. And besides Egon said not to disturb him—so I just put him up in the garret.”

Guido felt sick with sudden apprehension. The *Herr Pastor* had been so frightfully pro-German—this might have shocking consequences.

“Where is your father now, Elschen?” he demanded.

“Those unmannerly Americans made such a noise that they disturbed him. And he was just writing such a beautiful part of his sermon. I know, because I read it afterwards.”

She began to cry, softly.

“‘Afterwards!’ ” Guido cried. “Elschen, where is your father, *now*?”

“Those horrid Americans said, ‘Old gent, you had better come along with us, too.’ ”

Guido made a wild rush for the front door. Tearing it open, he flung back over his shoulder:

“You stay right here in this house until I get back.”

“Guido!”

“Well?”

“Our engagement is at an end.”

Guido paid no more attention to Elschen's words than if a little toy-dog had barked out its impotent indignation at his heels. It was not thus, on the spur of an angry moment, that he wished to break with Elschen. He did not desire their engagement to end in a way which would leave a bad taste in the mouth—not in Elschen's, not in his own. So, without answering her, he left the house.

There followed the most crowded hour of Guido's life.

First of all he found Henry Foerster, the laconic school-mate who had taken to the law. Henry had recently been admitted to the bar, and Guido had employed him once or twice in the matter of a real estate transaction. To Henry Guido explained the pastor's predicament as briefly as he might.

Henry was a communicant of Pastor Marlow's church and, like the pastor, had been violently pro-German during the first years of the War. But now, also like the Pastor, he had repudiated Germany. Henry was a straightforward, honorable, intelligent young man, but these qualifications of heart and mind did not prevent him, as they did not prevent thousands of other hyphenates, from desiring England's downfall quite as earnestly as America's victory. Guido, through continual contact with this cast of mind, had accustomed himself to regard it as a sort of astigmatism of the mental vision, and paid no more attention to it than he would have to recurrent asthma or chronic catarrh.

On this occasion Henry certainly proved himself to be both efficient and resourceful. With a dexterity which filled Guido with wonder, he located the room to which the conspirator and the dominie had been taken without any delay. Egon von Dammer was just being haled before the magistrate as Guido and Henry entered. Guido could not understand a word of what was being said by the Judge or by Egon. The court-room was crowded, and although the court attendants saw to it that there was no talking, the voices of the Judge and the attorneys seemed to be neutralized by a continual, dull, subdued, penetrating sound that surged through the room, and which seemed to emanate from nowhere in particular.

The Judge made short shrift of Egon. He was to be held without bail for trial. Nor did his Honor at first seem inclined to accept bail for the Pastor. Henry had come fully equipped in the Pastor's behalf. He had taken from his safe the deeds of several houses owned by Guido, which had recently been transferred to him. He stepped forward into the small arena which was fenced off by a railing from the rest of the room, and said something to the Judge. While Henry spoke, the Judge regarded Guido thoughtfully. He was an old man with very white hair

and a very red face from which peered the startlingly blue eyes which he had fixed sleepily on Guido's face.

Suddenly he roused himself from his torpor.

"If I accept bail at all it will have to be a very large sum," he said; "twenty thousand dollars at least." This was said apparently to no one in particular. Then, with sudden sharpness, looking severely at Guido, he said:

"Pastor Marlow has the reputation of being very pro-German."

"He was pro-German until quite recently, your Honor," said Guido. "But he has come around entirely."

"Why?" asked the Judge, sleepy again.

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Guido, "excepting that the cumulative evidence against Germany was too great to be resisted any longer. His conversion is sincere, if that is what you mean. At least it seems so to me."

"And you don't think he knew that this von Dammer was hiding in his house?"

"I am absolutely certain he did not, your Honor. I am certain the Pastor did not know that von Dammer was hiding under his roof."

This, since Egon had been discovered in the garret, caused considerable hilarity among the initiated. Even the Judge smiled blandly. Only a frock-coated individual, whose function Guido could not guess, maintained his dour look. Guido looked blank. He had intended no jest and was surprised by the wave of laughter that eddied about him. The Judge condescended to point out the humor of Guido's remark to Guido, by repeating part of his reply, "under his roof." Then Guido laughed also.

"How can you be certain?" the Judge next inquired.

"His daughter told me, your Honor, that her father was engaged in writing his sermon, and did not hear von Dammer enter."

"Then it was the Pastor's daughter who hid von Dammer?"

A sick panic of apprehension descended upon Guido. He turned pale and did not reply.

"I see it was the daughter," said the Judge.

"Your Honor!" Guido found his voice, but it was strained and husky. "Miss Marlow is a mere child in understanding. Von Dammer, whom she had probably not

seen in years, went to her and told her he was in trouble and asked her to hide him. We were all school-mates together. If he has done something wicked, I am sure Miss Marlow has not the remotest knowledge of it."

"Don't worry about the girl," said the Judge, not unkindly. "This is America, not Germany. Although we are at war, we do not prosecute a woman who, out of kindness and perhaps a little sympathy for her native land, helps a man holding the same political affiliations as herself to escape. It would be different if Miss Marlow were actively involved in this von Dammer business. But her personal reputation is too good to permit us to suspect that. Are you aware that it is rather a remarkable thing for a man in uniform, like yourself, to offer to go bail for a German suspect?"

"My uniform should be the best guarantee, sir, that I am absolutely certain of my grounds. I wouldn't lift a finger for von Dammer, sir, although we were school-mates, because I believe him to be guilty. I am just as certain, however, that the Pastor is innocent."

The Judge looked hard at Guido for a moment.

"Very well," he said, "I will accept bail for the Pastor."

The rest was arranged with a rapidity which amazed Guido. He hardly knew to what he had sworn and signed his name before it was all over, and Pastor Marlow was at liberty to go.

As they made their way out of the court-house, Guido caught sight of the man whom Glanders had hailed as Pete. He called to him.

"Can't you tell me what von Dammer is up for?" he asked.

"Sure I can," said Pete. "Placing bombs on out-going vessels. Damn dirty trick that. Besides, he is wanted for murder. Young fellow by the name of Redlich—out in New Jersey—reported to be a suicide. That report was a blind. The Secret Service knew right along it was a case of murder."

"But, surely," Guido objected, "von Dammer himself is not accused of having done Redlich to death?"

"Well, something very much like it. The theory is that Redlich was one of von Dammer's gang—for some reason

he fought shy of their damn doings, and they were afraid he'd blab and croaked him for that reason."

"What's the charge against von Dammer—murder or manslaughter?"

Pete grinned.

"I don't think it will be either," he said. "You see, Redlich must have had his finger in the pie at one time or other. And murder trials are expensive. Ain't New Jersey, like all the other States, got enough claims on her purse without having to finance a six-weeks' free entertainment for all the chair-warmers of the region? Besides, the Federal Authorities have got first claim on him. That's *we*. He'll probably be sent to Atlanta for the duration of the War. Then, after we've beaten the Huns to a pulp, we can't make the Kaiser a better present, I'm thinking, than sending him home all the jail-birds that we have gathered together for him, bad cess to them all. Once a lion has tasted blood he wants more. And once a man has tasted crime he wants more, also. Let 'em loose on Germany, I say. Why should we spend our good coin to save Germany trouble in the future?"

"Oh, my prophetic soul!" thought Guido, as he walked leisurely down the broad flight of steps of the Court House.

Henry was waiting for Guido. He had called a taxi and had put the Pastor inside because the Pastor's nerves were badly shaken. Guido, after thanking Henry, jumped into the taxi, calling out his instructions to the man at the wheel.

"Guido," said the Pastor, "I can never thank you enough for what you have done for me to-day. Needless to say I did not know that von Dammer was in the house. I am quite angry with Elschen for taking him in. Even if I were still pro-German, which, as you know, I am not, I would not have connived at his escape." (Guido doubted this.) "But I am no longer in sympathy with the Germans. America is the only country I care for. But more than I fear Germany, do I fear England, the robber nation. England, the pirate among nations, England, the vampire——"

"For heaven's sake, *Herr Pastor*, be quiet," said Guido, for he thought he saw the chauffeur prick up his ears.

Neither spoke again until they were indoors.

Elschen had been watching for them, and after admitting them clung to her father alternately laughing and crying.

"My child," said the *Herr Pastor*, "you and I are greatly indebted to your *Braeutigam*."

Elschen stiffened at the word.

"Papa," she said, "Guido and I are no longer engaged. I have told him I will not marry him. I will not marry a man who is a traitor to his own race. I will not marry a man who is an apostate to the socialistic Cause. I will not marry a man who can betray a friend."

"That's nonsense," said Pastor Marlow. "Guido would never betray a friend."

"He betrayed Egon," said Elschen, with terrible doggedness.

"Allow me to explain, *Herr Pastor*," said Guido. "I met Glanders on Main Street near Elm. He questioned me about Egon. I told him Egon had gone into the tobacco shop. The place is so small that Glanders, of course, could at a glance tell that Egon was not secreted anywhere on the premises. Doubtless he and his men had been trailing Egon while we were walking down Union Street together, but they were too far behind him to get him then. What happened is, of course, entirely plain. Egon told me he was going into the tobacco shop. Instead of doing so, he leapt over the railing of the parsonage garden that skirts the side street, and under cover of the high stoop entered the basement door. Glanders knew that Egon had disappeared on Elm Street between Union and Main. As he was not in the tobacco shop it was perfectly plain that he was in the parsonage. As to my part in the affair, I did not 'betray' Egon, for I did not know where he was. But I have suspected Egon for some time, and if Glanders had not gotten him, it is more than likely that I would have handed him over to the police this very evening."

"There, Papa! You see!" said Elschen. "Oh, Guido! I would never have believed it of you. No, I will never marry you now. Never."

A great exultation swept through Guido. It is true, he had not meant to break with her thus—at random, as it were. He had felt that the severing of the insufferable thongs which had bound him to her must be accomplished

with dignity, with decency, with due observance of the conventions. He had not meant to leave it to chance. He had meant to make it plain that it was not chance, but the imperious summons of a consecrated love that made inevitable the snapping of the fetters which had bound and gagged him for over a year.

All this he had desired for Janet's sake. Not for Elschen's. He wanted the right to go to Janet like a freeman who has won his freedom in honorable battle, not like a manumitted slave.

What, after all, did it matter?

He was free. Elschen's pride, for the moment, remained undamaged. Later it would be badly hurt—he could afford to be magnanimous.

He said, very quietly:

"I think you are entirely right, Elschen. It is better that our engagement should end."

He became aware that the Pastor's eyes were fixed upon him searchingly. A hideous fear took possession of him. Would Elschen's father attempt to reconcile them? Would he try to persuade Elschen that he—Guido—had acted properly and that she owed him an apology? Elschen, Guido thought, would be only too willing to be persuaded. She was looking at her father with wide-open, frightened child's eyes. It was evident that she, too, was expecting her father to interfere.

With a quick resolve Guido hardened his stamina.

A momentary impulse on his part, foolish but not base, had plunged him into this undesired engagement. A momentary impulse on Elschen's part, puerile but not sincere—as he thought—had opened his prison door. He had accepted the consequences of his fleeting exuberance and had stood by them like a man. Elschen would now have to accept the consequences of her transient anger and submit to them like a woman. He was generous enough to hope that for her sake there would be no attempt made at a reconciliation, but he was resolved not to relinquish his newly found freedom. The resolution buoyed him up, gave him an air of self-mastery and self-assurance which he did not always show.

When the Pastor finally spoke, his words came as a surprise.

"Elschen," he said, "you are not a child but a woman, and you know that rash words and rash actions sometimes have cruel consequences. If your broken engagement brings you unhappiness, you will have to remember that it is your own conduct which has involved you in spiritual discomfort. Guido, before you go, I would like a word with you in my study."

Bowing to a frightened-eyed, humbled Elschen, Guido followed the Pastor to the little cubby-hole of an office where he received his parishioners and wrote his sermons.

Closing the door carefully behind him, Pastor Marlow laid his hands on Guido's shoulders.

"My lad," he said, "I want you to answer me truthfully. You do not love my daughter and never loved her. Why, then, did you ask her to marry you?"

Guido reddened and hung his head. He could not find words in which to frame a reply.

"For a long time," Pastor Marlow continued, "I wondered whether the engagement was not a mistake—on your part. I wanted to talk to you about it—to question you frankly, but to probe into the heart of a human being is a delicate task, even for a *Seelsorger*, and I shrank from it. But I think you owe me an answer now. Or, am I mistaken—do you love Elschen?"

"I will tell you the entire truth, *Herr Pastor*," Guido replied, looking the old man straight in the eye. "I do not love Elschen. Our engagement—well, it just happened. One day I was very, very happy because I had seen a girl in whom I am very much interested"—poor Guido's face was crimson by this time—"and I ran in to see Elschen for a moment. And, well, I was foolishly happy, and not thinking—it seemed so natural—I just kissed Elschen."

Guido stopped, overcome with shame awakened by the recollection of that dreadful hour—his Nightmare Hour.

"And Elschen assumed the kiss to be a proposal?" the Pastor questioned Guido, gently.

"*Jawohl, Herr Pastor.*"

"And loving another woman, and not loving my girl, you would have married her if this had not happened?"

"I intended speaking to her this very day. My word of honor, *Herr Pastor!* You will admit that I was very

unpleasantly situated. The truth is I have always been very fond of Elschen. When we were children I liked her better than any other little girl, and she liked me best of all the boys. And we used to kiss each other—I hope you don't think it was very naughty—just innocent child-kisses, from which, since we were both sisterless and brotherless, we derived a good deal of comfort and companionship. I think, sir, if I may say so in my defense, if I had not kissed Elschen when we were children, I would never have taken the liberty that day—but it seemed so natural, I was so ridiculously, so unspeakably happy—I was just bursting to tell someone how very, very much in love I was."

Pastor Marlow nodded gravely. His hands dropped from Guido's shoulders. He flung himself heavily into his well-battered chair, and began playing with a ruler that lay to hand. Suddenly he threw it down with a resounding bang.

"Please do not think ill of me, sir," begged Guido. "Having done something wrong, I tried to act honorably, I did, indeed. It barely occurred to me that I was doing Elschen a wrong. I suffered—so terribly—myself."

"Guido," said the Pastor, "we cannot undo an ill deed by committing another ill deed. A wrong subtraction cannot rectify a false addition. For the sake of perpetuating a lie you would have sacrificed the happiness of two people, your own and the other girl's, and possibly, probably, almost certainly, Elschen's. For sooner or later she must have discovered the truth. Take the lesson of this hour to heart, my lad. Certain immolations of self are intrinsically immoral. Learn to stand sturdily by the truth, no matter how great the discomfort entailed for the moment. Your ideals are high—there should be no blot nor smirch upon them. After your gallant rescue of myself, I feel ungracious in saying even this to you. You forgive me?"

"It is for you to forgive me, not for me to forgive you," said Guido. He was deeply moved. "And, sir, may I give you a piece of worldly advice?"

"Surely."

"You have, I know, a little note-book in which you enter all your sick-calls, and in which you also enter the business of each day so that, virtually, by consulting this little book

you can account for every minute of your time. The Secret Service knows just what Egon has been doing, and to what use he had been putting his time. Your note-book proves your alibi for every hour of the day. Your servant will testify that you go to bed regularly every evening at ten o'clock. Go carefully over your note-book and see that there are no gaps. See that every call and every appointment is verifiable. I think you will then have nothing to fear in the event that your case should be called; for while I think the case will be dropped for dearth of definite charges, it may be as well to be prepared."

When the front door finally closed upon Guido, he hesitated a moment before descending the stoop. He thought that Elschen must be standing somewhere behind the curtained windows, anxiously peering out for another glimpse of him, hoping against hope, poor child! that he would come back and tell her he was sorry and ask her to let things be between them as they had been. He was not in the least angry with her. The esteem in which he held her heart was increased rather than diminished by the indulgent tolerance invoked by her understanding. He pitied her immeasurably. The thought of the pain which she was enduring made the joy which was beating in his veins seem indecorous and cruel. But it did not weaken his purpose.

The day was warm, yet he shivered. He himself had endured the iron discipline of unhappiness for so long a time that he could not bear to think of another human heart being thrust into that despotic harness. If his own unhappiness only had been at stake, he might have forfeited it. He might have crawled back into his prison, might have slipped his head back into the noose.

But there was Janet.

The thought of her invigorated him like the tang of salt air, braced him like a draught of cold well-water, heartened and strengthened him. And so he walked slowly down the stoop and away from the house, certain that a pair of unhappy, tear-dimmed eyes were following him.

He had no intention at first of going to see Janet at once. Then he remembered that she would be at home for this one day only, and he threw compassion and discretion and decorum to the winds and went straight to the Geddes home.

The woman who opened the door for him was a stranger who told him that Miss Geddes was not at home. Guido guessed that this woman was a former servant who had married, and whose services had been requisitioned for the day so that Janet might not be entirely alone in the large house. He hesitated a moment and then he said:

"I think you are mistaken. I met Miss Geddes as she was coming from New York and left her here at her door. I am very anxious to see her. Will you not take her my card?"

The woman looked amazed, annoyed, uncertain.

"Please do," said Guido. "And tell her if it does not suit her to see me now I can come back later—at any time."

And he thrust his card into her hand together with a five-dollar bill. Upon the card he scribbled: "Something has happened. I must see you."

The woman separated the bill from the card and looked dubiously first at one and then at the other. When she gazed at the card her bovine rigidity seemed to dissolve. When she regarded the bill, she looked flushed and angry. Guido remembered Redlich and his ferry-man and perceived that he had dropped a similar brick. He said very quickly, very insinuatingly:

"Please do as I ask you. I must see Miss Janet. Look here, you were young once yourself."

The woman removed her gaze from the five-dollar bill, which was still engrossing her incensed attention, and regarded Guido with a stolid stare. He looked appealingly at her and smiled. He was, as we know, the least conceited of human beings. But he could not help knowing that magic dwelt in his smile. Few men, no woman resisted it.

The woman thawed, thawed completely and generously. She was middle-aged, plump, rosy-cheeked—a pleasant, motherly, cleanliness-breathing person.

"Take back yer moonie, laddie," she said, "I'll ne'er take it off ye."

And Guido, fearing another eruption of righteous anger, submitted to the ignominy of receiving back his bill. He decided that he would get Janet to take her a gift from him thrice the value of the sum she had refused. He liked her spirit—the spirit of the old-fashioned retainer who

will not be bribed excepting by an appeal to the humanity common to all.

When the woman returned from her errand, she smiled blandly and broadly.

"Maak yerself to home in the study," she said, "the bairn'll be down in a trice."

And after ushering Guido into the study, and closing the door upon him, she came back presently, and thrust her head into the room.

"It's a woom day," she said. "Will ye be having some iced tea while ye be waiting for the bairn?"

Guido thanked her and said he stood in need of no refreshment. But the little incident seemed a good omen. He needed it. For now that he was alone in the dim, silent room, with its stale, vitiated atmosphere, and the curious dead chill which inhabits rooms that are tenantless and unsunned, stark terror suddenly swept over him. How was he to tell Janet? It had seemed so easy. What if she didn't love him after all—if he had been mistaken in his reading of the message in her eyes, if the kindness which her parents had shown him throughout this dreadful year had been due to Janet's indifference and not to forbearance? He had had the audacity to summon her from her necessary and unpleasant task on a mere presumptuous supposition. Who was he, what was he, that the flower of womanhood should care for him? His knees turned to jelly. He felt faint. He entertained the idea of flight. He actually strode to the front door. There, fumbling for the knob, there came to him a recollection of the confusion that had come over Janet upon seeing him spring up unexpectedly at her side. And he went tamely back to the study and sought to master his nervousness as best he might.

Suddenly he could hear Janet running lightly down the stairs. The stair carpet had been taken up, and the quick patter of feet conjured a vision of her liteness and agility. He rose in expectation of her entrance.

"How stuffy this room is!"

Janet went to the window and opened it, flinging back the shutters.

She seemed quiet and self-possessed to him, but she was, in reality, in a state of volcanic upheaval barely less in-

tense than his own. The meeting with him had stirred her profoundly. Instead of unpacking her trunk, as she had planned to do, she sat down upon it and forgetting time and place, and all but eliminating the consciousness of self, she had allowed herself to drift into the rosiest of day-dreams which she had indulged in in years. Janet was not what is ordinarily called a romantic girl. Golden argosies, the flamboyant constellation of events, temperamental rhapsodies had no power to move her excepting to laughter. But she had her dreams—dreams of royal purple such as only youth at its finest and best can spin. She dreamed of exalted service and of exalted love. Dreamed of offering herself for inoculation with the untested serum for some hitherto incurable disease; dreamed of saving the lives of a hundred wounded men left in her charge by an untoward fate at the end of the day of battle; dreamed of giving her blood for transfusion to save some soldier indispensable to his country and humanity. She was young and healthy, and she had no sickly, sentimental unwholesome yearnings for death in which hypochondriac young ladies sometimes indulge; but so sensible was she to the pain of having life's finest gift, love, pilfered from her, that her yearning for surcease from that pain at times tinged her dreams with the pallor of finality, and she would imagine herself, having accomplished the projected good, as sinking into a delightful lethargy which the indiscriminating call death. And at her bedside, brought thence miraculously—here the bizarre banalities of romance would nilly-willy intrude—was Guido, her hero, her friend, her lover!

That afternoon, sitting on the hard, uneven surface of her trunk, under the eaves of the roof, she had faced delicious extinction as the climax of these heroic fantasies at least three times, and had, as many times, come back to the no less delicious sense of warm, pulsing life. But whichever of the two delicious sensations between which she gravitated enmeshed her, the heavenly sense of spiritual contact with Guido, and of physical nearness as well, persisted, and wove itself into her soul like a song luminous with beauty and passion.

So real did his presence seem, so closely and sacredly her very own possession, that she was startled into speech-

lessness when old Mrs. Aimers, lumbering slowly up the stairs, presented Guido's card to her.

"Ye'll ne'er say him nay," said Mrs. Aimers, and fell forthwith to lauding Guido to the skies.

"What has he done to you is what I am wondering," said Janet, teasing the old retainer to hide her own confusion. "Was it his bewitching smile, or his handsome eyes, or his grand manner, or the way in which he lifted his bonnet?"

"'Twas not the way in which he lifted his bonnet but the verra fact that he lifted it," said Mrs. Aimers, quite seriously. "I dinna ken but verry few of the gentry as'll touch their bonnets to a serving woman. An' he took it off guid well. 'Tis rare. He's a doughty lad, and wi' such a wan the finest bairn will have nought to fear."

The old woman's words sobered Janet. What had brought him to the house? There was one errand, and one only, she thought, on which he might have come. But she would not dare allow this hope to occupy the foreground of her thoughts, or to usurp her heart. She must rein herself in, appear seemly, calm, indifferent. Indifferent! Dear God in heaven, when she loved him to madness!

So, with the sweet incense of his dream-self still hovering about her, she went down to greet her hero, and opened the windows, and pulled up the blinds, and bustled about generally in the most matter-of-fact manner in order to get a grip upon her outrageously misbehaving nerves.

He, seeing her outwardly so calm, was engulfed in black panic. The moment was catastrophic in the havoc it was working in him.

"How stuffy the room is," she repeated, and seated herself in the farthest corner of the davenport.

Still he did not speak. Her sense that something tremendous was impending, deepened. His eyes were fixed gravely upon her face. She did not dare to meet his gaze. She felt that if she encountered his eyes she would do something desperate—something unmaidenly—propose to him, fling her arms around him, tell him she loved him. How could she tell what dreadful thing she would not do under the influence of this indescribable feeling?

She anathematized love. She had ample time to do it in, for Guido's silence remained unbroken. Before love

came to her she had been free, a wild thing and untamed. She had enjoyed every minute of the day and slept soundly at night, with never a disturbing thought or hope or desire. But now there stirred in her incessantly a veritable cauldron of unimagined, fantastic feelings, sentiments, emotions—

"Janet!" Guido had spoken at last.

"Guido?"

"Janet, something has happened."

With a start she recollected that there were others in the world besides herself and him—and that there were other considerations besides love.

"What is it? Bad news?"

"Good news—at least for me." Guido moistened his parched lips. "Janet, my engagement to Elschen was never a real engagement; it was—" he did not wait to say what it was, but cried impetuously, "I will tell you all about it later. Now—only this—I intended asking her to release me this afternoon—she anticipated me—I am free."

His broken sentences were luminous and vivid as a lightning-streaked sky.

Janet gave him one blinding look and then dropped her eyes. She strove to resist the tidal wave of happiness that was sweeping over her.

"My engagement was never a real engagement," he came back to that. "What I mean is that I never proposed to her."

Janet started at that as if electrified.

"You never proposed to her?" she asked in a perfectly colorless voice.

"No. But—I kissed her."

"Kissed her?" Janet's voice seemed to Guido to be an adumbration of the last judgment.

"Yes. I was so happy, so inordinately, idiotically happy because you had come back from the South. And then—then—"

He broke off. Shame overwhelmed him. The Nightmare, he perceived, was not yet over.

"Do I understand you correctly—because you were happy that I had come home, you went and kissed Elschen?"

Without looking at Janet, Guido nodded.

Then the unexpected happened. Janet laughed. She had a very charming laugh, full-throated, creamy, musical.

Guido, in the happy days at "Waldheim," had memorized more than one joke from the magazines to evoke that rippling harmony. But there are times when laughter is the most terrible and the most cruel thing imaginable. And so Janet's laughter seemed to him now. Guido's self-possession was ground to pieces by it.

"Ah," he cried, "you despise me! How can it be otherwise?" and he broke into a cruel flood of invective directed against himself. He called himself hard names, derided himself as a weakling, reviled himself as a knave. A deluge of self-pity followed hard upon the heels of his self-loathing. He pictured luridly his emotional sufferings during the past years. He told her over and over again that he had never loved anyone but herself. He did not spare himself and he did not spare Janet. The steel and cement barriers of convention and custom which ordinarily hold in check the torrential waters of passion crumpled up like a house of cards and went down before the terrific impact of an honest, unashamed love restrained long past the restraining point and hour.

Janet's laughter was strangled by the elemental flood that, at his words, swept over her. Her hysteria was checked by his tenser, more vibrant feeling. It seemed to her that she was seeing not so much the travail and agony of a human soul as a human soul itself. She had a sense that the invisible was being made visible for her by the white-hot passion of her lover—that, hereafter, she would know his soul more intimately than even her own. There was in the experience through which she was living something of the sullen, brooding grandeur of a thunderstorm among the mountains, something of the swift, tense glory of the hurricane.

Presently his passion had spent itself. His outburst ended as abruptly as it had begun. Then, trembling, unnerved, shaken to the very roots of his being, Guido fell upon his knees at Janet's side, and resting his elbows upon the edge of the davenport, buried his face in his hands.

He neither wept nor sobbed. The room was very still, so still with the warm, indolent summery stillness that filled it, that the buzzing of a solitary fly was plainly heard.

Then there occurred the most beautiful thing that had ever happened to Guido. A soft hand slipped itself be-

tween his face and his arms, and gently, very gently and tenderly, lifted his face.

"Guido, you poor, dear boy!"

Encircling him protectively with her arms, Janet drew him toward her until his face rested against her bosom. As she held him thus, there came into his face a look of utter abandon and helplessness. The spiritual passion which had swept through him had left him sapped of his physical strength. Not very long before, chafing under the injustice of the thing, Janet had believed that she belonged more irrevocably to him than he to her. Now she was amazed, appalled, exultant because he was so completely her chattel.

"Soul of my soul, mind of my mind, spirit of my spirit," she thought, thrilling in every nerve. It was her immortal moment, the moment of her supreme and incontestable triumph, and it tasted sweeter to her for its long withholding.

The moment of physical inertia passed. Guido's strength came back to him, flooding his veins with new life. A light leapt into his eyes before which she quailed, yet which delighted her.

He wound his arms so tightly around her that she winced with the sudden pain of their pressure. Wincing, too, with an emotion the very antithesis of pain.

What were the rosiest day-dreams compared to this?

She leaned her cheek against his and they sat thus, forgetful of the world, forgetful of the War, forgetful almost of themselves—so completely had they turned themselves into love's votaries.

They were conscious only of the sweet music made by the beating of their hearts and the throbbing of temple against temple—a strange rhythmic majesty of wordless song that seemed to rivet together their very souls.

"Oh, Janet," he said, suddenly, and she saw that he had not entirely sloughed off the memory of his long agony.

"Yes, dear," said Janet, comprehendingly, soothingly.

Unconsciously they clasped each other more closely, held each other more tightly, and present, of one accord, they sought each other's lips.

CHAPTER XXIV

IT became apparent to Guido in the early days of their engagement that Janet desired a speedy marriage. So, for that matter, did he. Where is the young man in love who does not? But unselfish considerations urged him in a contrary direction. Janet was just the sort of a girl who, if she lost her husband, would cling to her widow's weeds for the rest of her life. There was in Guido nothing of the sensualist, and his imagination was clean of those voluptuous cravings which, reaching beyond the grave, masquerade in the guise of a soulful desire for unending fidelity. All in all he thought it kinder to leave her free; if he came back well and sound of limb their nuptials would taste the sweeter for having suffered postponement; if he was killed Janet's wound would heal more quickly for being a maid and not a wife; if he came back crippled the thought was unendurable to him that she should be tied to him for life.

But Janet was as determined to wed as he was determined not to. With a deftness which left him floundering hopelessly more than once, she continually broached the subject, broached it not as a suggestion, or an insinuation, or a question, but as a foregone conclusion.

One day in October, when the autumnal gold of the maples draped itself against a sky of purest blue, Guido and Janet, both on pre-arranged leave, returned from a long drive in a new roadster which Guido had bought. There was a blend of voices emanating from the Professor's study, and Guido, who was helping Janet off with her wraps, said:

"Sounds like old Dob's voice."

"And why not?" Janet inquired.

And Dobronov it was. He had wished to see Guido very particularly, and had followed him from his own to the Geddes home. He said that he had a great piece of news to tell Guido. He seemed somewhat confused,

and was so slow in beginning his yarn, that the Professor, who apparently was in the secret, laughingly urged him to begin his story.

"To it," he said, "and get it over with."

"Well," Dobronov began, using the American word of all work, "it's this way. I'm engaged to be married."

"Engaged!" Janet and Guido echoed the amazing word, although neither could have said wherein its amazingness consisted. Dobronov was neither too old nor too bad-looking to contemplate marriage. Guido reflected that it was probably only Dobronov's religious eccentricities that had hitherto placed him beyond the pale of so eminently human an institution as marriage. Now that his spiritual perambulations had come to an end, there was no reason on earth why Dobronov should not settle down and make an excellent husband.

"To whom?" Janet demanded. "Do we know the girl?"

Dobronov's embarrassment became intensified. This was a new attribute, and Guido and Janet did not know what to make of it.

"Out with it," said Guido.

"Elschen Marlow," said Dobronov, in a very small, frightened, subdued voice.

"Elschen Marlow!" Guido had the floor to himself this time. "Why, old chap, I am glad, I am heartily, heartily glad."

Guido's cordiality dissipated Dobronov's embarrassment. Immediately he became loquacious. Apparently he feared that for some occult reason Guido would take offense at this sudden consummation of his—Dobronov's—long-cherished dream of happiness, for, as he presently confided to Guido—the others having considerably eliminated themselves from the room—he had fallen in love with Elschen the very first evening he had seen her, which was on the evening when Guido had preached to him the Gospel of Socialism. Didn't Guido remember? Guido, being reminded, did remember, and it came to him with something of a shock that the coolness between himself and Elschen had gathered head very rapidly after that evening. He did not love Elschen, he had never loved her, but the human heart is a vessel wherein lies enshrined the most curious hodge-podge of emotions, good, bad and indifferent. For

one moment Guido was held in thrall by an ugly feeling—mortification that Dobronov should enjoy what he himself had rejected, mortification that Elschen, impelled like himself by a false sense of honor, should have held blindly to their engagement although love for another man had been stealthily absorbing her heart.

He was ashamed of the feeling and ruthlessly beat it down, congratulating Dobronov anew upon the happy conclusion of his suit.

"We are so congenial," Dobronov concluded a lengthy rhapsody, "we are such good socialists, and Elschen will just love to start up sewing and cooking classes and kindergartens for the wives and children of my employees. And, after the first of the year, I am going to socialize the mills. Every employee will become part-owner—and will, as a matter of course, receive his share of the dividends at the end of the year."

"And when there is a bad year, will your employees share the loss with you, too?" Guido inquired, a little ironically.

"That," said Sergius Ivanovich, smiling happily, "we have not considered."

Then Guido laughed, and called Dobronov the dearest old idealist in the world.

After Dobronov was gone, Janet, sitting with Guido in the historic corner of the davenport, said:

"Did Sergius Ivanovich say when they are going to be married?"

"Very soon. Next month, probably."

"And when are *we* going to get married?"

"We?" Guido looked very grave. "When I come back from France. If I come back. If I come back sound of limb."

"Ah! I thought so," said Janet, flushing. "I thought so." He had never seen her angry before. "And have you the audacity to tell me that you love me?"

"You know very well that it is because I love you," Guido began, but was interrupted by an indignant "Tush," that sounded oddly like the Professor's favorite ejaculation, followed by a no less indignant "Stuff and nonsense" which proclaimed that Janet was her mother's daughter as well as her father's.

There followed a spirited dialogue, in the course of which Guido succeeded in appeasing Janet's heady wrath, but did not succeed in shaking her determination. Nor did she succeed in shaking his. He remained sweetly reasonable, and quite paternally patient under her denunciatory volleys. And his serenity exasperated her all the more.

"Upon my word, Guido," she said, "as a rule it's the man that begs the girl to set an early date—you are humiliating me. That's what."

"It's for your best, dearest," said Guido.

"It's not for my best," she retorted, hotly. "I know better than you do what's for my best. Have you thought—that you may be killed?"

"Yes, or crippled. That's precisely why——"

She interrupted him with:

"I don't care a rap whether you are crippled or not. Oh, I know that it's hateful for me to say that—but I love you, I love you, and if you come back crippled you will be dependent on me—you'll have to let me do for you, you'll belong to me intensively, and no one else will have the smallest right in you, because I'll earn you as my very own over and over again every hour and every minute of the twenty-four hours a day."

Her passion was like flaming torch. It nipped and scorched and flared and was withal a thing of supreme beauty and purity. Guido was abashed and awed. He told himself that everything in life was dross and shard compared with love such as this.

"Say you are killed!" She came back to that with a deliberate pertinacity in which, at any other time, there would have lurked something of morbid callousness. "Say you are killed. What have I to remember you by if we have not been married? You and your wonderful brain, your kindly disposition, the innumerable hopes, tendencies, desires, animosities, likes, dislikes, talents, ambitions, aspirations which have made up your personality will be wiped away like that!" She made a careless gesture of the hand. "I cannot stand it, I tell you. I want you to go to war, of course. I'd hate you if you didn't want to go—but I tell you frankly I cannot stand the thought that you may be wiped out like that and I'll have nothing that is yours, nothing that is you, to hold against my heart, to take in

my arms, to remind me of you, to grow into your likeness—Oh!" she cried, volcanically, "don't you understand? Don't you?"

Guido was too deeply stirred for words. He took her in his arms. The wild onrush of her passion, her tumultuous demand for motherhood, particularly her concrete desire to perpetuate his image seemed to him the most mysteriously beautiful and at the same time the most pathetic and hallowed thing that had ever come into his life.

They were married the following week, and it was early in January that Guido left for France. He had a twenty-four hour leave to bid his wife farewell.

Janet showed her parents a strangely composed face after the final adieus. Her father and mother were sitting in the study, the tea-wagon between them, when she came back from her leave-taking.

"I wonder," said Janet, "I wonder—will Guido and I live to sit together like that?"

"Of course you will," said her father. "The war is almost over."

"Not too far over, I hope," said Janet, with spirit, "to prevent Guido from ringing in his bit."

She laid a number of long, official-looking envelopes in her father's writing table, and carefully placed a paper weight upon them.

"Daddy," she said, "don't forget to lock those papers away in my drawer of your safe."

"What papers are these, my dear?" her mother inquired.

"Some very important papers," Janet replied, with a smile. "Something occurred this morning while Guido and I were out—he joined the Episcopal Church this morning. He was christened in the British Chapel in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine."

"Why this secrecy?" her father demanded. "Why the Episcopal faith? Why St. John the Divine?"

"I'll answer your second question first, father. Because it is my faith. As a matter of fact, I don't think Guido should have taken the step, for he does not—as far as I can see—believe in a single dogma of our church."

"My dear!" Mrs. Geddes expostulated. It was impossible to tell whether she was shocked by Guido's committal

to a faith in which he did not believe or by Janet's tranquil acceptance of the fact.

"He doesn't, really," Janet continued. "But, for that matter, neither do I. Don't be horrified, Mother. You see, Guido thinks, and I think so, too, that the dogmas matter nothing—nothing. It's the spirit of religion that matters—the sense of God, as Guido one day phrased it. He felt very keenly about all this. He was most impressive in giving his reasons for joining a church. As he sees it, it is the duty of all thinking men to align themselves, so that all men may know where they stand. In no other way can the bulwark behind which the Religious Instinct is entrenched be strengthened. He joined the Church not because he accepts Christian doctrine but because it is the only possible way of publicly registering a protest against atheism, against irreligion, against the mechanistic conception of life, against the crass aims of materialism. If this were a Buddhist instead of a Christian nation, he would have joined the Buddhist church, moved by the identical considerations. He has as yet no specific religious faith, if by faith we mean a set of dogmas such as those through which each religious sect seeks to individualize itself and to express its temper and its genius. He hopes, if he lives, to arrive at some definite faith—but he has not the remotest conception in the world of the nature of the mold into which that definite faith may ultimately pour itself."

Mrs. Geddes looked puzzled, but Mrs. Geddes never allowed herself to be puzzled long. She was an excellent woman, but she was of the earth, earthy. Vapory nothings she had no predilection for. But she was not narrow minded, and she believed that every soul, like every physical body, has the privilege to enjoy its own pet luxuries.

"But why this secrecy?" her father repeated his former question. "Why St. John the Divine?"

"Because he did not wish Dr. Koenig to know. It would break the old man's heart to know that Guido had joined a church. He would consider it self-stultification, you know. He believes in Guido's Destiny, and he would think that in affiliating himself with a church Guido had nullified

his chance of achieving the Destiny which is waiting for him."

"If he thinks joining a church the equivalent of self-stultification, I should be tempted to say he deserves to have his heart broken," Mrs. Geddes replied, with some acerbity.

"But Guido does not wish it, Mother," said Janet. Her voice implied that her husband's wish was her law. Mrs. Geddes laughed good-naturedly and said no more.

"Personally," said the Professor, "I am inclined to think that Guido's joining the church marks merely the beginning, and not the end, of his Destiny. Janet, do you believe in your husband's Destiny?"

"If I did not, would I be so calm?" Janet retorted. "A man with a destiny cannot be killed, Daddy. At first, after Guido went to camp, I felt certain, oh! positive! that Guido would be killed the first day out. Then, one night when I could not sleep for worrying about him, the thought of his Destiny came to me, and it helped me lots. Only," she conceded, after a pause, as if desperately anxious to be quite truthful, "only, sometimes fear gets me by the throat and then I am shockingly afraid."

A curious accent had crept into her voice. Both of her parents looked up sharply.

"If only he lives long enough to know that—the baby is all right," she said.

"Janet!" the Professor cried, and Mrs. Geddes said, petulantly:

"And you never told us!"

"I couldn't, mother dear. I had to tell Guido first—and I wanted to tell him—not to write him. If he only lives that long. I am a little afraid, you know, if the news that he is—the news, you know—should come before my baby is born the shock might hurt the little one. And so, if Guido is doomed, I hope and pray he may live at least that long."

Mrs. Geddes nodded her head in complete acquiescence, thereby affording ample pabulum for the Professor's reflection that the maternal instinct is really the most selfish instinct in the world. Sublimely selfish, of course—but selfish, all the same.

He touched the envelopes which Janet had laid upon his table.

"What do the other two contain?" he asked.

"One," Janet replied, "bears an inscription in Mr. Yomanato's writing. Read it, please."

The Professor adjusted his spectacles and read:

"To be opened in case Christianity fails to satisfy."

"Stuff and nonsense," said Mrs. Geddes. "What does a Japanese know about Christianity?"

"Mr. Yomanato was christened along with Guido this morning, mother," said Janet, "and to be candid, of the three of us, I think he is the only one who really believes in the doctrines of the Church."

"Stuff and nonsense," Mrs. Geddes said, again. "When I was young people never thought of changing their religion as if it were a garment. If a man was born a Catholic, he remained a Catholic. If he was born a Protestant, he remained a Protestant. What business has a Japanese to turn Christian?"

"I would not like the missionaries to hear you, Mother," said Janet, laughing.

"And the third envelope?" the Professor asked. "It is addressed to Sergius Ivanovich in Guido's hand."

"Yes." Janet fell into a brief reverie. "This," she said, "is not going to please you two. In fact, it is going to displease you. But please to remember that Guido and I are pleased."

"Well, Jane," the Professor said to his wife, "we've been warned, haven't we? not to express ourselves too freely."

"Don't be absurd, Edward," said Mrs. Geddes. "I shall express myself as freely as I please."

"Of course you shall, mother," said Janet, soothingly. "And so will father. Just watch him."

"Well," said the Professor, "then give us a chance to express ourselves by communicating to us the contents of the third envelope."

"Why—stocks, bonds, securities of every description to the value of a million dollars."

Mrs. Geddes gasped out some unintelligible words, and the Professor said, gravely:

"I think you ought to be entirely frank with us, Daughter. What does it mean?"

"It means, Daddy," said Janet, "that Guido does not believe that big fortunes should be handed down from generation to generation. He did not lift a finger to earn that vast sum of money. Neither did his father. Neither did his grandfather. And he doesn't want to saddle the incubus on me and on his son."

"Well, Professor," said Mrs. Geddes, "this is the first time that I have heard a million dollars called in incubus. Janet, if your father had donated a million dollars away from me to a friend, I assure you, I would not have been pleased."

"Then it is fortunate that I never owned so large a fortune," said the Professor, "for truth to tell, Jane, I think Guido is quite right. These vast fortunes should not be handed on from generation to generation. Of course," he concluded, grudgingly, "a million dollars is small potatoes compared to some fortunes."

"Isn't that a socialistic idea?" Mrs. Geddes demanded.

"It may be a socialistic idea," said the Professor, "but it is a practice, which, if universally followed, will help make the country secure against the menace of socialism."

"And—may I inquire?—did you allow yourself to be entirely beggared?" Mrs. Geddes demanded of Janet.

Janet laughed.

"Don't take it so to heart, Mother," she said. "Guido is worth almost a hundred thousand, still. That should provide amply for us in case he comes back disabled."

The Professor had been studying the envelope in his hand.

"But why?" he asked. "Why all this money for Dobronov?"

"Guido wants Sergius to send one-half of it to Russia to be used for the Cause with which his mother was identified. The other half Sergius is to hand over to some socialistic organization in America of which he approves."

This time the Professor's feelings were as genuinely outraged as his wife's. Janet held up her hand protestingly to ward off the questions which both of her parents were firing off at her.

"I'll give you Guido's explanation," she said. "He felt

that he wanted to erect some sort of living monument to his mother's memory. He would have liked best to give himself to socialism, but that he could not do because he has lost faith in its platform. So he gave his money instead. As for the other half—the half that is to enrich the coffers of American socialism—it's like this: Guido is by no means certain that a strong socialistic party would be an unrelieved handicap for this country. Socialism, he says, is an enemy to our body politic which neither of the two other parties can afford to ignore for the fraction of a moment. We have traveled so far away from monarchical ideas that the monarchical specter can no longer frighten us. Socialism is the danger which looms ahead, not alone for our country, but for the entire world. As far as America is concerned, it will require continual vigilance on the part of our two large political parties if they wish to cope successfully with socialism. The mere presence of a socialistic party in our midst would force the two other parties into their best behavior. It will force them to compromise with each other as well as among themselves—within the confines of their own camps—upon occasions when, lacking that incentive, they might be tempted to continue futilely at loggerheads to the detriment of the country at large. Socialism will also force them to lend an ear—albeit an unwilling ear—to its less preposterous demands, and, by threatening to unduly exaggerate the angle of divergence between Capital and Labor, would ultimately bring home the truth that the interests of Capital are identical with the interests of Labor, which is another way of saying that what furthers the interests of Capital furthers the interests of Labor, although this, it is true, is quite another thing from saying that the interests of Labor are always the same as the interests of Capital which, conceivably, cannot always be true since Labor, being a human, therefore a living organic body must have interests which, partaking of the vital, the emotional and the spiritual, cannot possibly inhere in Capital considered in the abstract. If, then, socialism will learn to concern itself only with the human resultant of the Labor versus Capital equation, in full consciousness of the fact that the difference, or residue, is an entirely normal one, and being normal, can never be expunged any more than the chemical

residue of ash can be obliterated after combustion, it will enter into a magnificently legitimate field of action. Socialism, in that event, would frankly recognize and as frankly concede the fact that it must never aspire to a victory so signal that complete domination would accrue to it, any more than either of the two other parties can ever hope to achieve a victory of such magnitude. Such a blue-penciled socialism, socialists will object, would be so exsanguined as to be socialism no longer. Which is entirely true, for such a denatured socialism would fit into the democratic pattern of our Commonwealth which a greedier, a more ambitious and uncompromising socialism, a socialism aspiring to the sinister eminence of frictionless opposition-free supremacy would never do."

There fell a pause after Janet ceased speaking which was broken finally by Mrs. Geddes.

"That's the Russian in Guido," she said, with her usual calm aloofness.

"I'm not so sure," said the Professor. "It may be the American, although I really do not entirely understand why he should wish to so materially aid a cause with which he does not care to identify himself." The Professor appeared to be quite stung by Guido's incomprehensibility.

"I gave you Guido's explanation," said Janet. "You are welcome to accept it or not. My own explanation differs from his."

"And how do you explain his action?" the Professor inquired, curiously.

"Simply in this way, Daddy. Socialism meant more to Guido than you or Mother or even myself, perhaps, can guess. You see, to him it was the Religion of Humanity—that was the slogan that caught him and caught him hard. He told me that after his disillusionment something seemed to have gone out of him which he thinks nothing can ever give back to him. You see—to him it was a real religion—just as it is to Sergius. It's hard for us to quite understand, although I think I do. It's like a man who has been in love with an unworthy woman, married her and all that. When he finds her out he will turn away from her, or try to help her if she is not beyond hope, but deep down a tenderness, a glamor will remain which

no lucidity of vision, no disgust, can ever entirely dissipate."

"Go on," said the Professor. He was listening with great intentness.

"It resolves itself into this. I think Guido wanted to prove to himself that he was entirely sincere in his attitude against socialism. That's why he gave away most of his money to socialism. He is no longer in the millionaire class. Economically he is an under dog. But you see, he has proven to his own complete satisfaction that his attitude is sincere, for he is as anti-socialistic to-day as he has been right along."

"What nonsense," said Mrs. Geddes.

"What idealism," said the Professor.

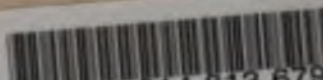
THE END.



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